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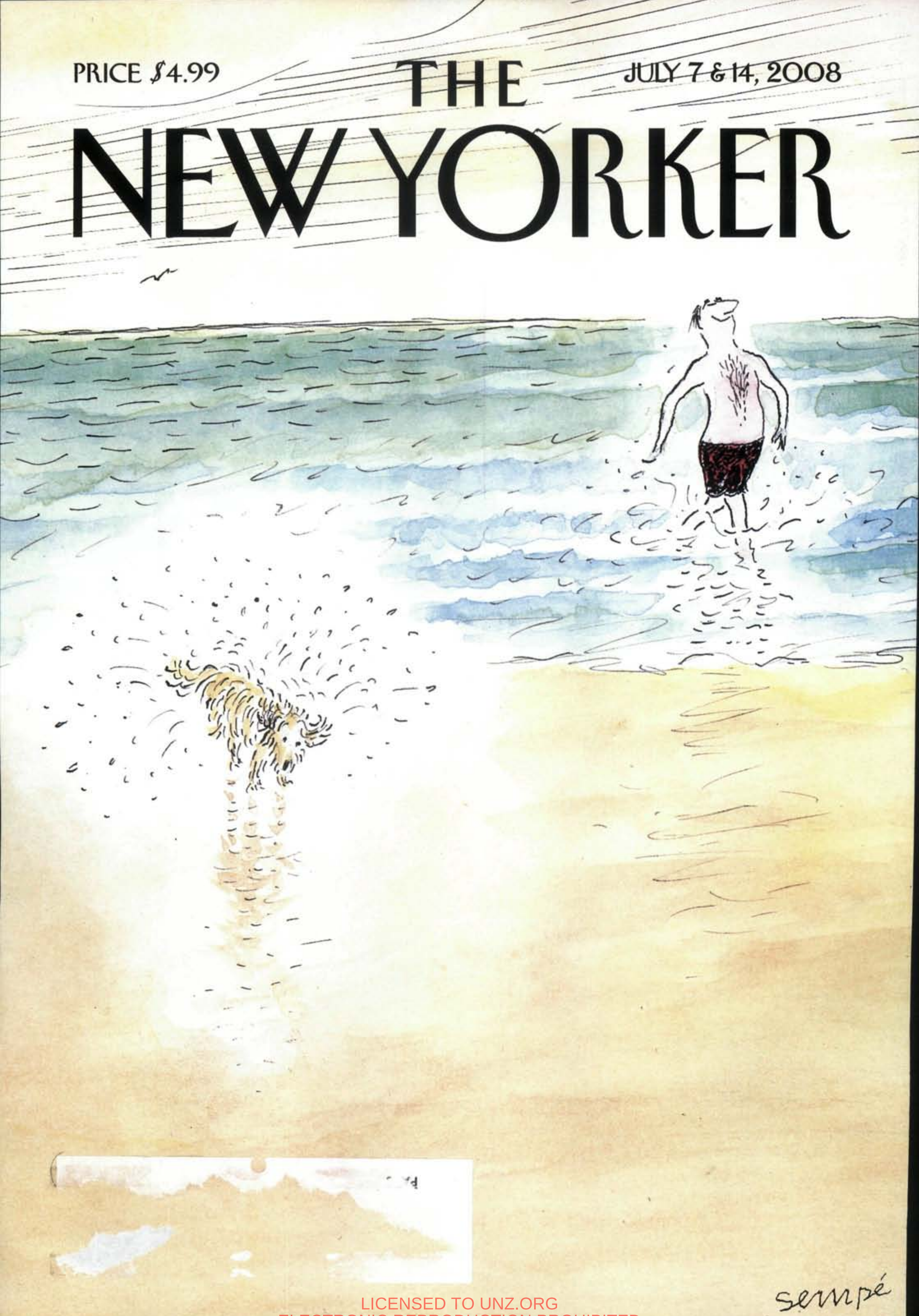
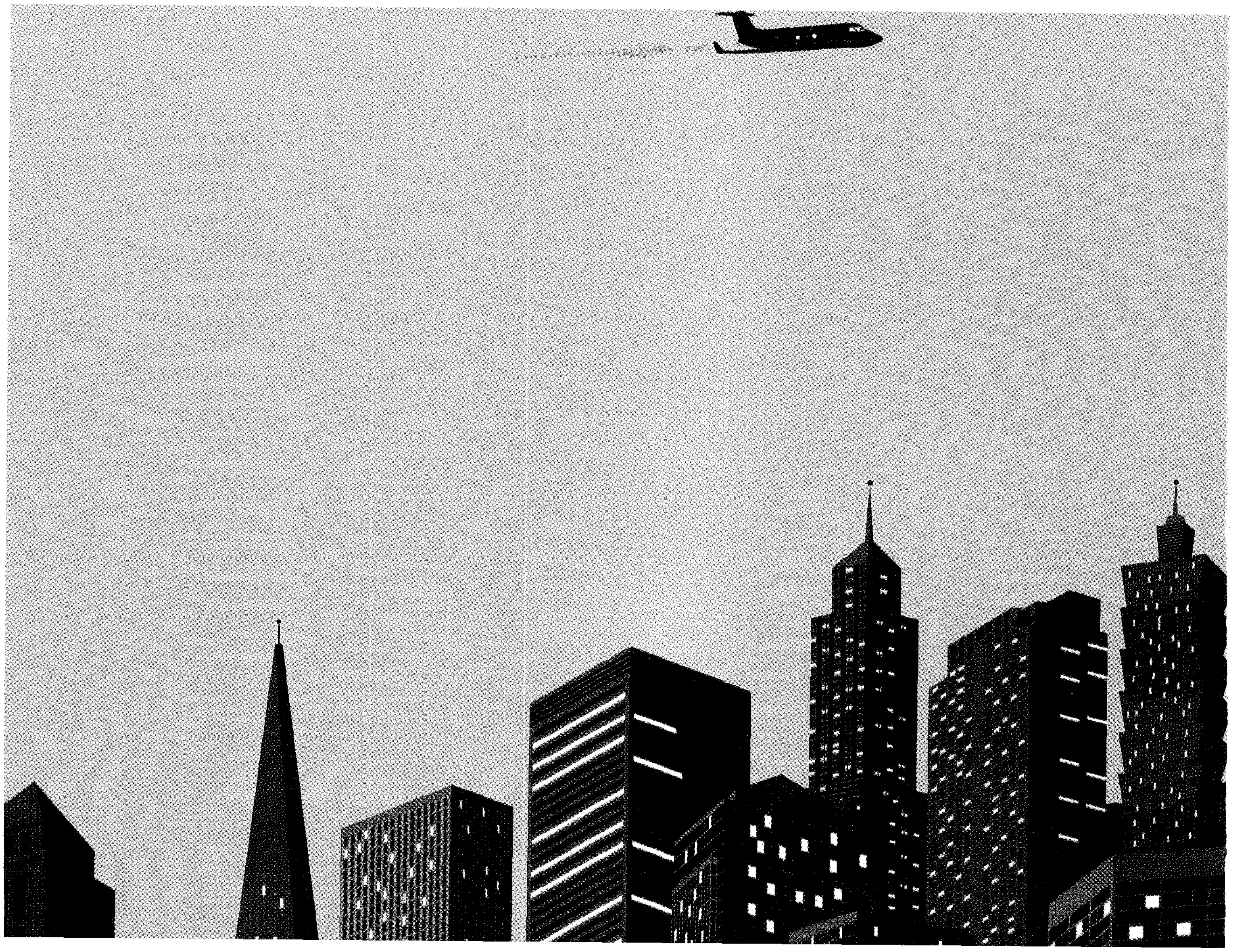
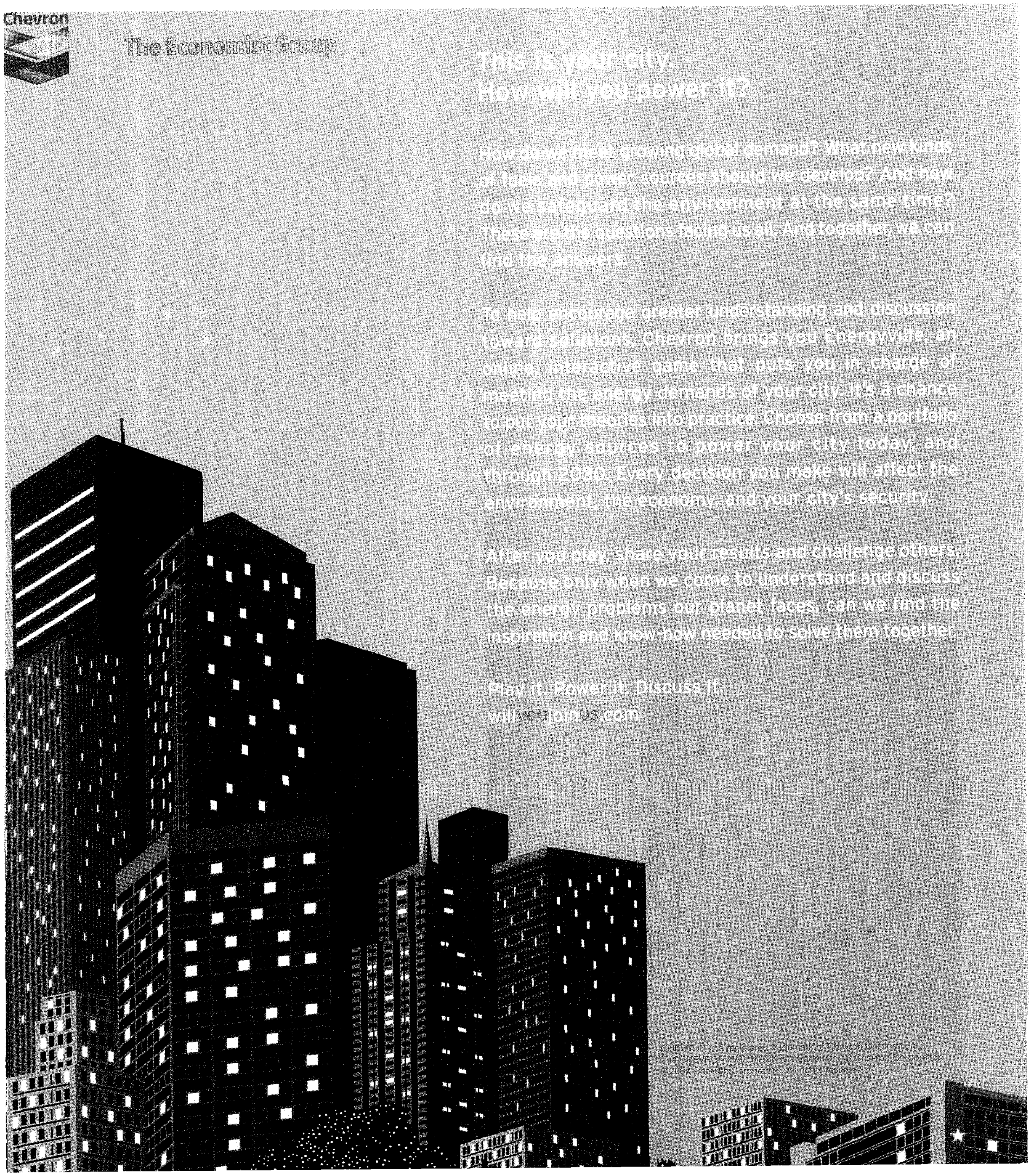
THE NEW YORKER

JULY 7 & 14, 2008







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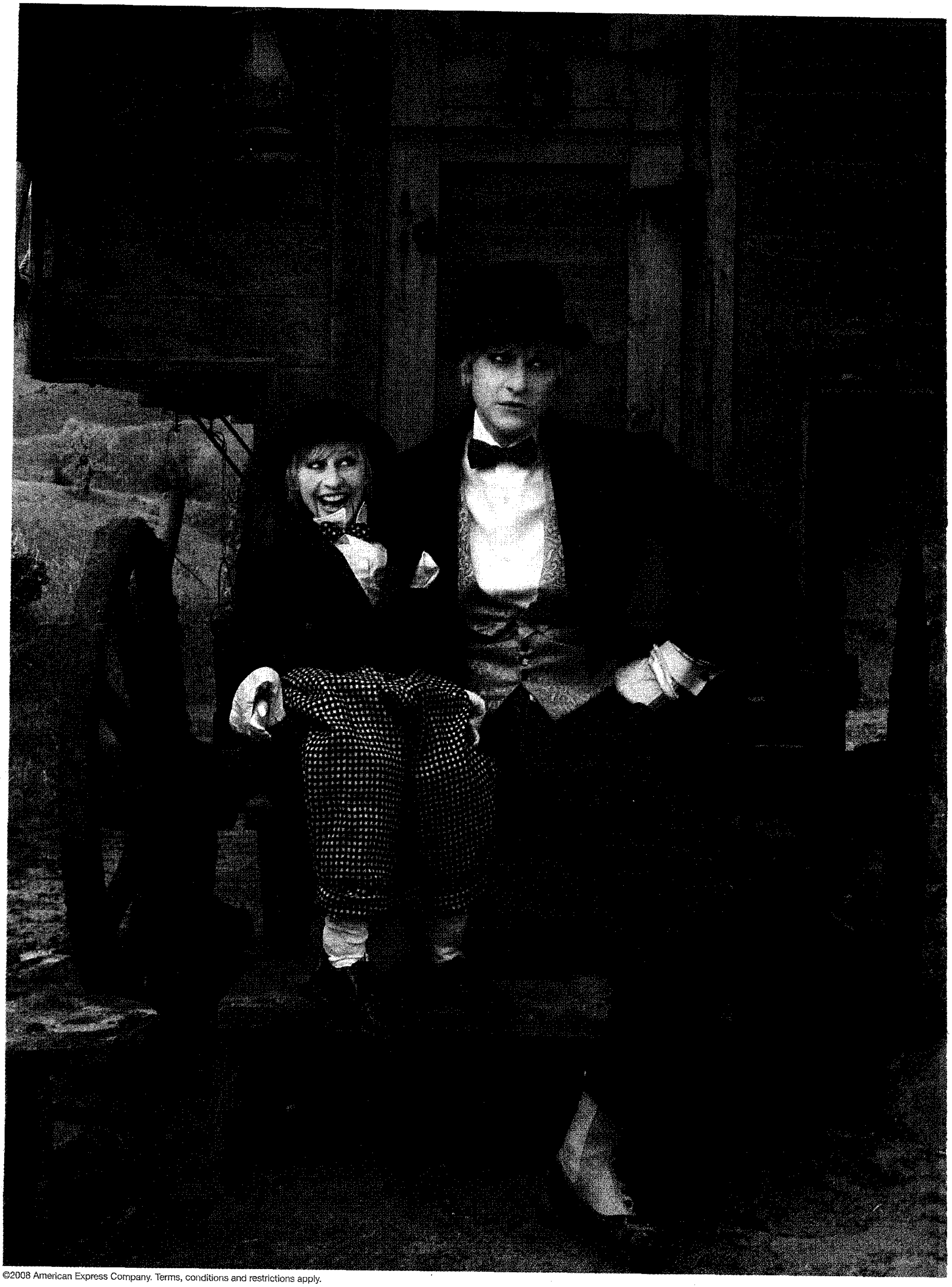

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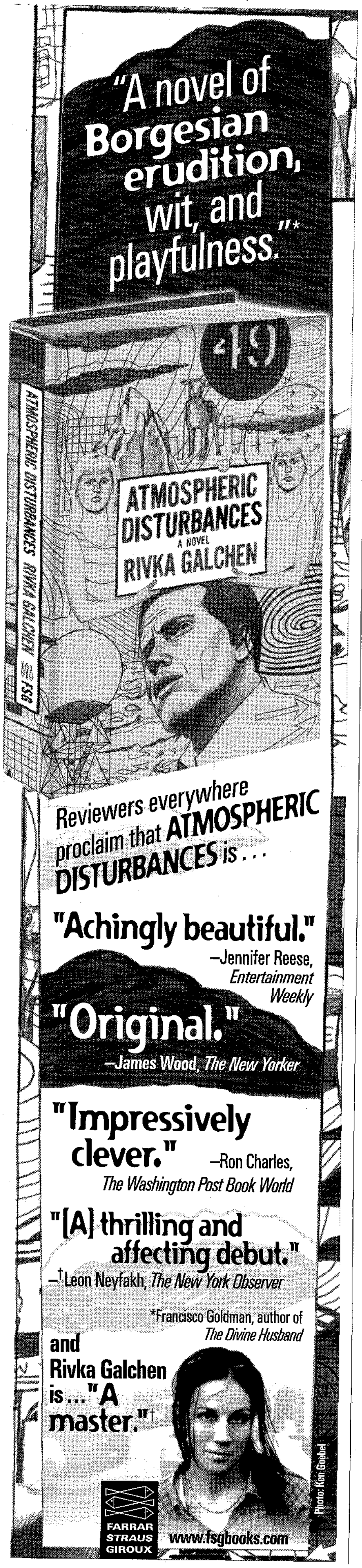
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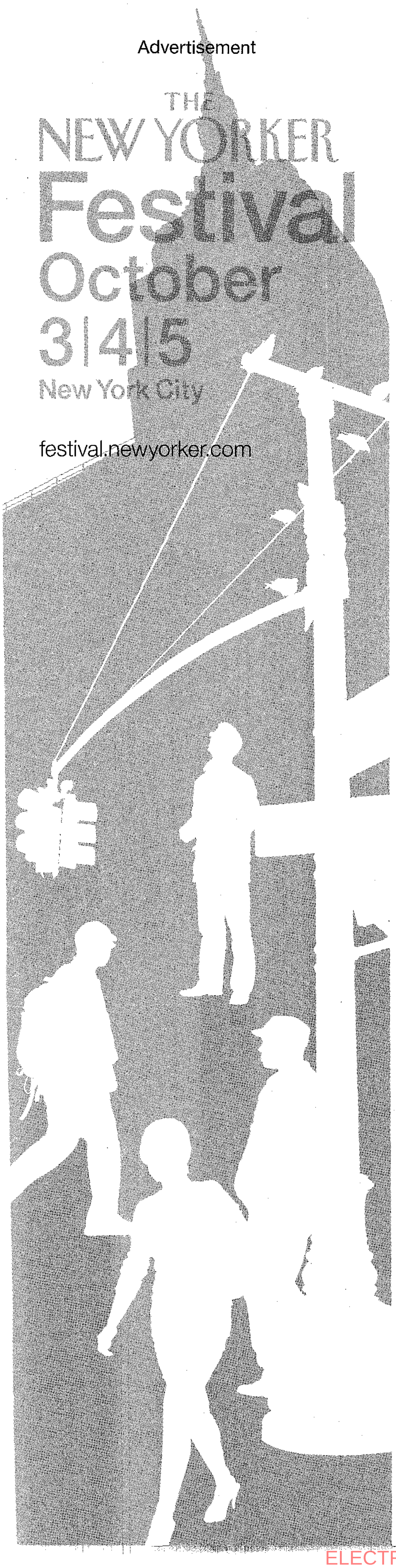

CONTRIBUTORS

Seymour M. Hersh ("Preparing the Battlefield," p. 60) is the author of eight books, including "Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib."

George Packer (Comment, p. 33) won a Helen Bernstein Book Award for Excellence in Journalism, for "The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq," and the 2008 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Off-Broadway Play, for "Betrayed."

Roger Angell (The Talk of the Town, p. 38) has written seven books on baseball, including "Game Time."

David Owen (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 49) is working on a book about New York City and the environment, based on his piece "Green Manhattan," which ran in the October 18, 2004, issue of the magazine.

Joan Acocella ("Romeo, Romeo," p. 42) reviews books and dance for the magazine. Her most recent book is "Twenty-eight Artists and Two Saints," a collection of essays.

Adam Gopnik ("The Back of the World," p. 52) is a staff writer. His books include "Paris to the Moon" and "Through the Children's Gate: A Home in New York."

Elizabeth Kolbert ("The Island in the Wind," p. 68), who writes regularly about the environment, co-edited, with Francis Spufford, "The Ends of the Earth: An Anthology of the Finest Writing on the Arctic and the Antarctic."

T. Coraghessan Boyle (Fiction, p. 78) has published eight collections of short stories and eleven novels. His new novel, "The Women," is due out in February.

Alex Ross (A Critic Abroad, p. 84), the magazine's music critic, is the author of "The Rest Is Noise," which won the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism.

Maureen N. McLane (Poem, p. 72) is a Lecturer in History and Literature at Harvard. Her first book of poems, "Same Life," will be published in September.

Ed Arno (Cartoon, p. 63), who died on May 27th, contributed cartoons to *The New Yorker* for thirty-two years, starting in 1969. This cartoon first appeared in the issue of May 19, 1986.

Adam Kirsch (Books, p. 92) is a poet and a book critic for the New York *Sun.* He recently published "The Modern Element: Essays on Contemporary Poetry" and "Invasions: New Poems."

THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM

Audio: *Seymour M. Hersh* talks about covert operations in Iran. / *Elizabeth Kolbert* and *Ryan Lizza* discuss McCain, Obama, and the environment with *Dorothy Wickenden.* / The Naked Campaign video series, featuring *Steve Brodner.* / Photographs of Samsø by *Joachim Ladefoged.* / The Cartoon Lounge, a new humor blog, plus Goings On, the Book Bench, and blogs by *George Packer* and *Hendrik Hertzberg.* / From the archives: *Seymour M. Hersh* on Iran, *Joan Acocella* on Mark Morris, and thousands of film reviews. / Animated cartoons, the caption contest, and a list of *New Yorker* events.

THE MAIL

FULLER'S LEGACY

Elizabeth Kolbert's excellent piece on Buckminster Fuller, who "called himself a 'comprehensive, anticipatory design scientist'—a 'comprehensivist,' for short," might have made some mention of what may be the eccentric genius's most lasting legacy: the molecule called, in official chemical parlance, buckminsterfullerene ("Dymaxion Man," June 9th & 16th). Also known as "buckyball," this soccer-ball-shaped assembly of sixty carbon atoms (chemical formula: C_{60}) is the archetype for a set of large carbon-based molecules known collectively as fullerenes. Although Fuller had nothing to do with these molecules—they were discovered two years after his death—buckminsterfullerene resembles a nanoscale version of his geodesic dome. Fullerene chemistry is a hot topic, and future generations of chemists will keep Fuller's name alive through a growing array of fullerene applications.
Richard Wolfson
Professor of Physics
Middlebury College
Middlebury, Vt.

I made dinner for Bucky Fuller at my house on February 10, 1977. On request: steak, baked-potato skins, and green peas. No Jell-O or prunes. (After his heart attack, he quit the steak.) Knowing my fascination with his great-aunt, the journalist and women's-rights activist Margaret Fuller, Bucky recited for me a jingle that night:

> Fuller is a name,
> For better or for worse,
> Of two who grappled with the Universe.
> I accept it, said the famous spinster;
> I explain it, said the bold Buckminster.

This sweet side, which charmed everyone who knew him, is hidden in Kolbert's article about Bucky and all the remarkable stuff he invented. He spoke to tiny babies, called everyone "darling," arranged for blood to be given to an ailing colleague in India, altered the world view of a generation of scientists, and built an expression of his love for his wife, Anne, "large enough to be seen from space"—the United States Pavilion at the 1967 World's Fair, in Montreal. The simple stone marking his and Anne's grave, in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is a metaphor for his inspiring life: a rose, her favorite flower, with which he courted her, carved in one corner, and, in the opposite, a geodesic dome.
Jessica Lipnack
West Newton, Mass.

BIBLICAL SUFFERING

James Wood, in his review of Bart D. Ehrman's "God's Problem," agrees with Ehrman that "theodicy as such does not exist in the Bible" (Books, June 9th & 16th). However, the Book of Job offers not only a dramatic illustration of the problem of evil—a righteous person suffering, apparently unjustly, in God's creation—but also, in its various speeches, an early expression of three classic theodicean responses to this challenge. One: God is just, according to a conception of justice that we can very easily understand; as some of Job's friends tell him, if you are suffering, it must be because you have sinned and God is (rightly) punishing you. Two: God is wise, and if a perfectly righteous person without sin suffers there must be some providential reason for that suffering. Three: God is just and wise, but the principles of divine justice and wisdom are beyond human comprehension—the humbling lesson conveyed to Job by God at the end of the story.
Steven Nadler
Chair, Department of Philosophy
Professor of Jewish Studies
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, Wis.

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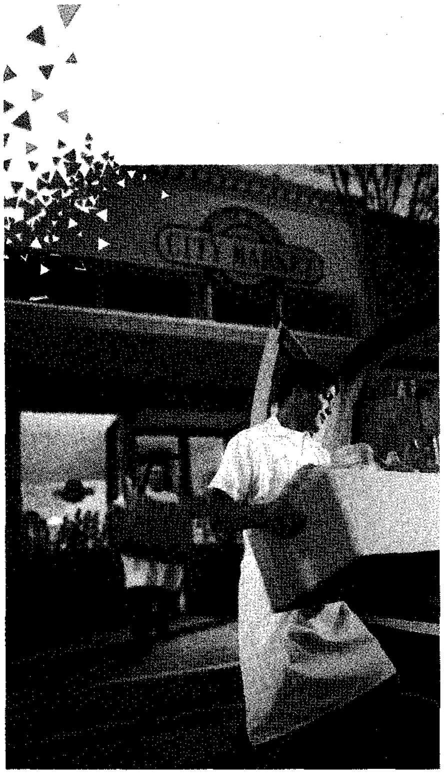

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"Mermaid," by Roy Lichtenstein, at Storm King Art Center. Photograph by Lisa Kereszi.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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			2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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THIS WEEK

NIGHT LIFE
NEW STEPS

Lincoln Center's Midsummer Night Swing, a longtime seasonal favorite, has a new leader this year, Bill Bragin. The mastermind behind Joe's Pub's recent success, Bragin brings a downtown flair to the uptown series. He kicks the dancing off in style with the singer-songwriter Nellie McKay, who will be leading a small swing band, and then follows up with Chuck Brown, the Godfather of Go-Go, and the cracked disco of the Loser's Lounge. (See page 16.)

ART
SKY'S THE LIMIT

One of the best-kept secrets in the city is James Turrell's "Meeting," a rectangular aperture in the ceiling of a modest-sized room at P.S. 1. Open to the sky, the work plays perceptual tricks on the mind and eye, most gloriously at twilight. The piece is open to viewers at sunset on Saturdays all summer. (See page 18.)

DANCE
PILLOW TALK

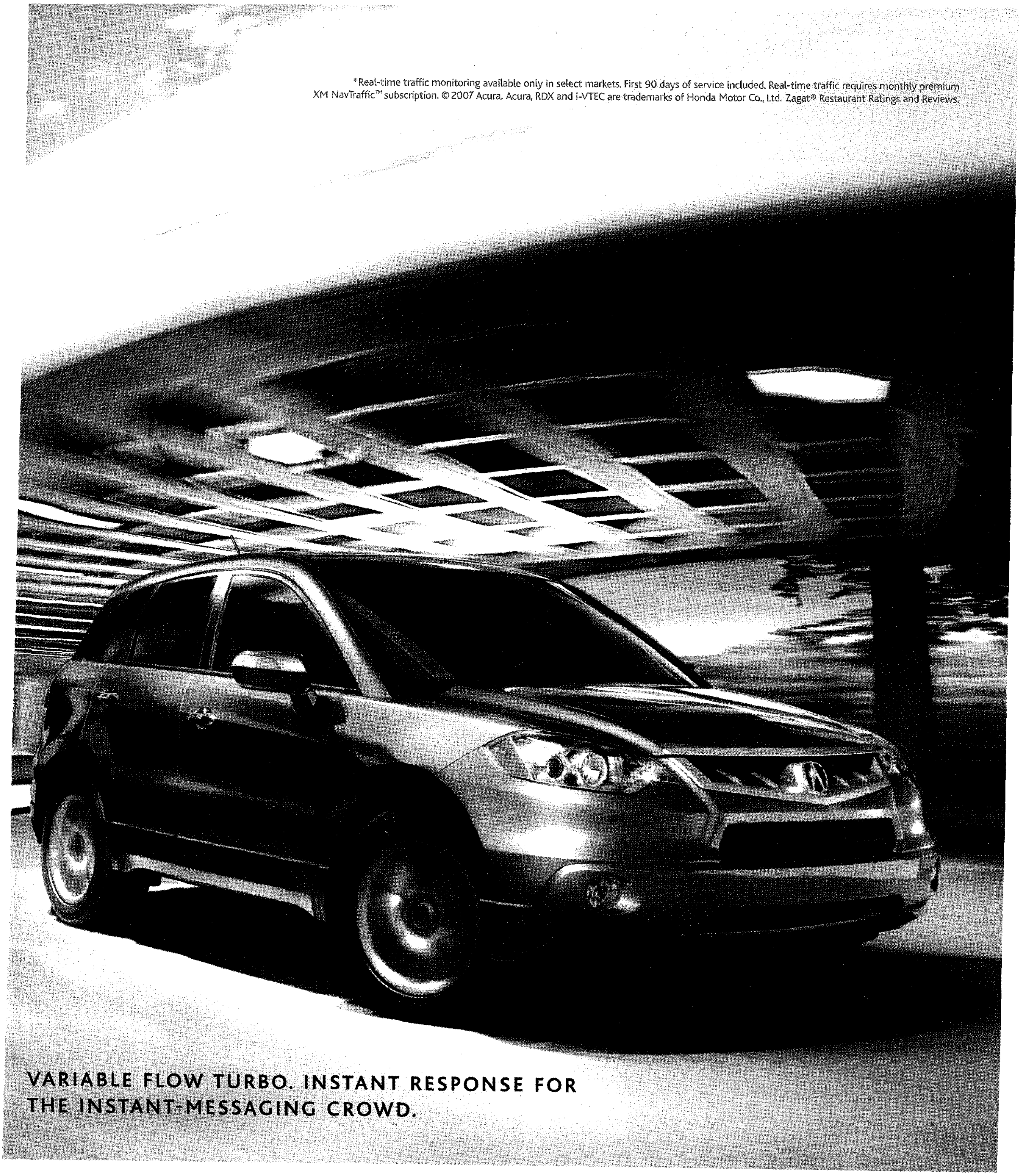
The Israeli-born British choreographer Hofesh Shechter makes his U.S. début at Jacob's Pillow with two tribal ensemble pieces. In addition, there will be performances by two noteworthy Japanese troupes, Ko & Edge (Butoh) and Natural Dance Theatre (work inspired by Lewis Carroll). (See page 20.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
MOUNTAIN SOUNDS

Marlboro is not the only music school and festival to bring distinguished teacher-performers to the green byways of Vermont. There's also Yellow Barn, in Putney; both offer concerts in the next two weeks. (See pages 21 and 22.)

MOVIES
SILENT LAUGHTER

MOMA's series "Dalí Laughs" makes it clear that the Surrealist icon laughed at what everyone else was laughing at: the great silent comedies. The incomparable offerings include Buster Keaton's "The General," Harold Lloyd's "Safety Last," Harry Langdon's "Shanghaied Lovers," and Charlie Chaplin's "The Floorwalker." (See page 27.)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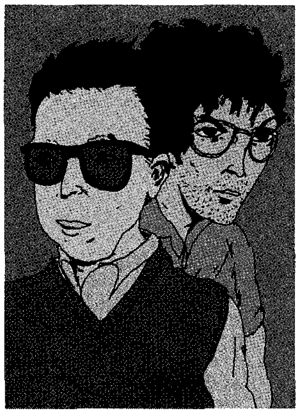
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
FEELING ALRIGHT

If you find fireworks a little quiet, consider a trip to Battery Park on July 4th, where Sonic Youth and the Feelies (the latter reunited after almost two decades) will be playing a free concert together. To be wildly reductive about the whole thing: the Feelies are the logical extension of the breakneck strumming in the Velvet Underground's "What Goes On," while Sonic Youth are the logical extension of Lou Reed's solo. The Feelies came from Haledon, New Jersey, across the Hudson from a downtown Manhattan that Sonic Youth will always embody. Clean where Sonic Youth are smudged, acoustic more often than not, and brazenly unhip years before it was acceptable, the Feelies were only a superficially milder band. Their dogged pursuit of the perfect rhythm-guitar pattern yielded a sound no less ecstatic than Sonic Youth's detuned catharsis. In the eighties, they were two of my favorite live American rock bands. Seeing them now, playing on the same stage, on the same night—well, it could drive a person to wave a flag.

—Sasha Frere-Jones



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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ANIMALS OUT OF PAPER
Second Stage's Uptown Series concludes with this play by Rajiv Joseph, an origami-themed love story. Giovanna Sardelli directs. Previews begin July 14. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 212-246-4422.)

THE BACCHAE
As part of the Lincoln Center Festival, the National Theatre of Scotland brings its production of Euripides' tragedy, starring Alan Cumming. John Tiffany directs a translation by David Greig. July 2-13. (Rose Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-721-6500.)

DAMN YANKEES
Sean Hayes, Jane Krakowski, Cheyenne Jackson, and Randy Graff star in the "Encores! Summer Stars" production of the musical, directed by John Rando. Previews begin July 5. Opens July 10. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

EAST 14TH
Don Reed wrote, directs, and performs this one-man comedy, about his upbringing in nineteen-seventies Oakland. In previews. Opens July 10. (New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

EAST TO EDINBURGH FESTIVAL
At 59E59, the fifth annual festival presents works on their way to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Opens July 8. (59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

EXPATRIATE
Lenelle Moïse wrote this two-woman play with music, about black American performing artists who move to France in an effort to escape racist limitations. Tamilla Woodard directs. Moïse and Karla Mosley star. Previews begin July 7. (Culture Project, 55 Mercer St. 212-352-3101.)

ICE FACTORY FESTIVAL
Soho Think Tank presents its annual summer festival of plays, including Neil Young's "Greendale," directed by Katherine Owens. Opens July 9. (Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 212-868-4444.)

KICKING A DEAD HORSE
Sam Shepard wrote and directs this play, about a successful art dealer who wants to escape to the American West. Stephen Rea stars. Co-produced by the Abbey Theatre, in Dublin. In previews. Opens July 14. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

LIFE IN A MARITAL INSTITUTION
James Braly's monologue, about the ups and downs of his twenty-year marriage, comes to SoHo Playhouse after a run at 59E59 in February. In previews. Opens July 9. (15 Vandam St. 212-691-1555.)

MARIE ANTOINETTE: THE COLOR OF FLESH
Joel Gross wrote this play, a fictionalized story about a love triangle involving Marie Antoinette, her portrait painter Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, and Count Alexis de Ligne. Robert Kalfin directs, in repertory with "A Brush with Georgia O'Keeffe." In previews. Opens July 10. (St. Luke's, 308 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE MARRIAGE OF BETTE AND BOO
Roundabout Theatre Company presents Christopher Durang's dark comedy from 1985, about his parents' long history of alcoholism and nervous breakdowns. Walter Bobbie directs. In previews. Opens July 13. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

MIDTOWN INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL
The annual showcase of new musicals and plays, as well as revivals, opens July 14. (Various venues. 212-279-4200.)

NEAL MEDLYN'S UNPRONOUNCEABLE SYMBOL
The world première of a pop opera of Prince songs, by Neal Medlyn and Kenny Mellman ("Kiki and Herb"). Opens July 9. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101.)

PERFECT HARMONY
This comedy, written by Andrew Grosso and the Essentials, about two competing high-school a-cappella teams, played in the 2006 New York Fringe Festival. Previews begin July 6. Opens July 10. (Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

SOME AMERICANS ABROAD
Second Stage revives Richard Nelson's comedy from 1989, about a group of American college students who travel to England with their professors. Anthony Rapp and Tom Cavanagh are part of the ensemble cast. Gordon Edelstein directs. In previews. Opens July 15. (307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

STAIN
Tony Glazer wrote this dark comedy, about the life and relationships of a fifteen-year-old boy. Scott C. Embler directs. Previews begin July 11. (Kirk, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

[TITLE OF SHOW]
Jeff Bowen and Hunter Bell's musical about writing a musical, which premièred at the New York Musical Theatre Festival in 2004 and later played at the Vineyard, comes to Broadway. The original cast includes Bowen, Bell, Susan Blackwell, Heidi Blickenstaff, and Larry Pressgrove. Michael Berresse directs. Previews begin July 5. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

TWELVE OPHELIAS
Woodshed Collective presents Caridad Svich's play, a reinterpretation of "Hamlet," at the McCarren Park Pool. Previews begin July 11. (Lorimer St. at Bayard St., Brooklyn. Tickets, which are free, may be reserved at www.theatermania.com.)

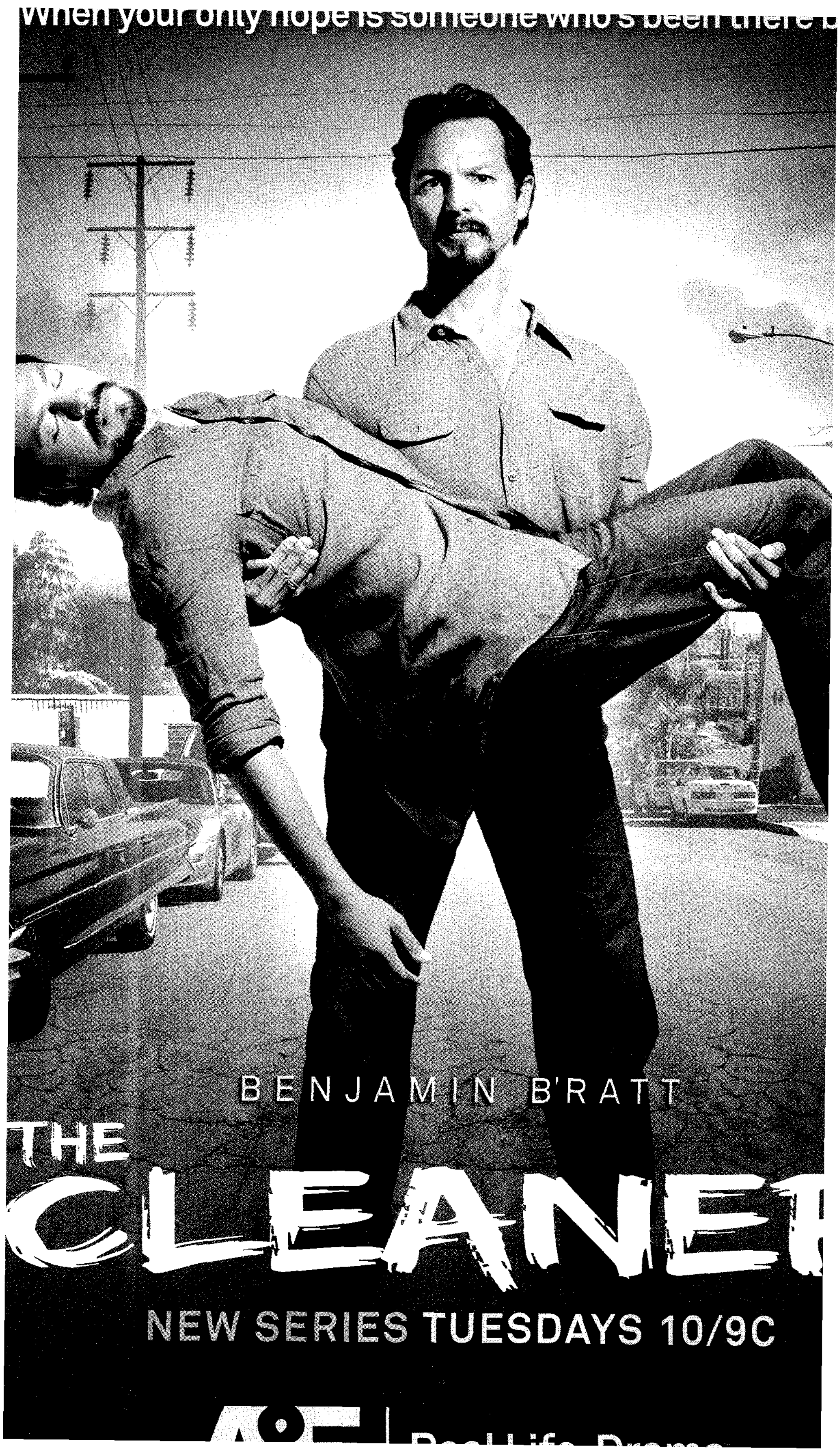
NOW PLAYING

ARIAS WITH A TWIST
The downtown drag cabaret singer Joey Arias performs a show with puppets designed by Basil Twist. (Reviewed in this issue.) (HERE Arts Center, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-352-3101.)

BASH'D
Two M.C.s, T-Bag (Chris Craddock) and Feminem (Nathan Cuckow), rap and enact the tale of a gay couple whose lives are transformed when one of them falls victim to a hate crime and the other seeks revenge. At its best, this "gay rap opera" is a bawdy sendup of a particular stratum of the homosexual community, but at its worst it is a borderline-racist mockery of hip-hop culture, attempting to draw connections between race- and sexuality-based discrimination without any sensitivity to the various forms of prejudice (many race-based) that currently exist within the L.G.B.T. community. Craddock and Cuckow, who also wrote this New York Fringe Festival hit from last year, give high-energy and charismatic performances, but, as this glib spectacle whose supposed purpose is the promotion of tolerance demonstrates, there's no accounting for taste, or for self-awareness. (Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 212-352-3101.)

A BRUSH WITH GEORGIA O'KEEFFE
Early in this superficial but earnest drama, the great American artist Georgia O'Keeffe tells the audience that it's not what happens in a life that's important but what one makes of what happens. Strange, then, that the playwright Natalie Mosco—who also plays O'Keeffe—has the painter talk for the next two hours, non-stop and at breakneck speed, about the events of her ninety-nine-year-long life without ever stopping to reflect with any real insight. Some important characters in O'Keeffe's life (all played by Virginia Roncetti and David Lloyd Walters), including her husband, the photographer Alfred Stieglitz, break into the monologue occasionally, but nothing that occurs on the small, bare stage begins to make sense of the magnificence of the paintings that are projected onto a poppy-shaped screen throughout the show. (St. Luke's, 308 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200.)

CIRQUE DREAMS "JUNGLE FANTASY"
Broadway has been accused of being a few clowns away from a circus, but in this family-friendly show—a musical-theatre-circus hybrid inspired by "nature's unpredictable creations"—it's the circus that's becoming Broadway. What the two dozen acrobats, jugglers, aerialists, and contortionists have to do with the savvy jungle motif or the assortment of incomprehensible songs about


When your only hope is someone who's been there b
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birds, bees, and "personality" is anyone's guess, but some of the circus stunts themselves are simply awesome—most notably a balancing act performed by two men in giraffe-print tuxedos. Comparison with the more aesthetically satisfying Cirque du Soleil is inescapable, but amid the various offerings on the Great White Way, including those cast via reality TV, to see pure talent on a stage—albeit involving a trapeze—is a breath of fresh jungle air. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY DANCES WITH THE STARS!
Spoofs include "South Pacific," "Gypsy," and "Grease." (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

MARKO THE PRINCE
Immigrants' Theatre Project presents the New York première of Jovanka Bach's drama, about an American who travels to a village on the border of Bosnia and Serbia to bury his mother. Trezana Beverley stars; Marcy Arlin directs. (Barrow Group Theatre, 312 W. 36th St. 212-352-3101. Through July 13.)

PALACE OF THE END
Epic Theatre Ensemble presents Judith Thompson's comic drama, about the Iraq war. Daniella Topol directs. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through July 13.)

"Lydia Lunch, Delancey Street Loft, 1978," by Godlis, in "No Wave," at KS Art.

THE PASSION PROJECT
Reid Farrington, a video-installation artist and frequent collaborator with the Wooster Group, directs this piece, which incorporates clips of Carl Theodor Dreyer's 1928 film, "The Passion of Joan of Arc." (3LD Art & Technology Center, 80 Greenwich St. 212-352-3101.)

POTOMAC THEATRE PROJECT
The company's season includes Howard Barker's "Scenes from an Execution," starring Jan Maxwell, Neal Bell's "Somewhere in the Pacific," and Sarah Kane's "Crave," in repertory. (Atlantic Stage 2, at 330 W. 16th St. 212-279-4200.)

STITCHING
The Scottish playwright Anthony Neilson's controversial 2002 drama receives its long-awaited U.S. première. Abby (Meital Dohan) and Stu (Gian-Murray Gianino) are a bitter, loveless couple whose relationship is buoyed only by their proclivities toward psychosexual role-playing, but when Abby announces her pregnancy, the legitimacy and value of their being together is soberly called into question. It's a superb, often disturbing script—firmly of the short-lived but widely influential "in-yer-face" theatre movement—but this production doesn't seem to know what to do with its rugged emotional terrain. The substitutions for certain Britishisms feel clumsy, the watering down of a scene originally involving a dildo seems gutless, and the actors seem at sea with the play's humor, sacrificing it for a certain self-seriousness that comes across only as timidity. (Wild Project, 195 E. 3rd St. 212-352-3101.)

SUMMER PLAY FESTIVAL
The Public and the Living Room for Artists join forces to present the fifth annual festival of new works. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH
New York Classical Theatre presents the Shakespeare play at Castle Clinton and throughout the gardens of Battery Park, free of charge. Stephen Burdman directs. (212-252-4531. Through July 12.)

OUT OF TOWN

BARD SUMMERSCAPE
The Spiegeltent returns, on July 5. Beginning on July 9, Peter Dinklage stars in Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," in a modern-dress version translated by Paul Schmidt, directed by Erica Schmidt. (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7900.)

BAY STREET THEATRE
Alex Timbers directs Christopher Durang's "Beyond Therapy," starring Kate Burton, Katie Finneran, and Darrell Hammond, beginning on July 8. For more information, visit www.baystreet.org. (Sag Harbor, N.Y. 631-725-9500.)

BERKSHIRE THEATRE FESTIVAL
Anders Cato directs Shaw's 1894 comedy, "Candida," through July 5, and Matthew Wilkas and Mark Setlock's satire on child pageants, "Pageant Play," opens on July 1. On July 8, performances begin for Karen Zacarias's comedy "The Book Club Play." For more information, visit www.berkshiretheatre.org. (Stockbridge, Mass. 413-298-5576.)

HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
"Cymbeline," directed by Terrence O'Brien, plays on the tented outdoor stage at Boscobel, in repertory with "Twelfth Night." For more information, visit www.hvshakespeare.org. (Garrison, N.Y. 845-265-9575.)

WILLIAMSTOWN THEATRE FESTIVAL
Campbell Scott stars in Ronan Noone's one-man drama, "The Atheist," on the Nikos Stage, through July 6; the world première of a drama by Nathan Louis Jackson, "Broke-ology," directed by Thomas Kail ("In the Heights"), begins on July 9. On the Main Stage, through July 12, Nicholas Martin directs "She Loves Me," a musical about anonymous pen pals who, unbeknownst to each other, are co-workers. For a full festival schedule, visit www.wtfestival.org. (Williamstown, Mass. 413-597-3400.)

Also Playing

ADDING MACHINE: Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 212-307-4100. **AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **BOEING-BOEING:** Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **THE COUNTRY GIRL:** Bernard B. Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **EDWARD ALBEE'S OCCUPANT:** Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529. Through July 13. **GREASE:** Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100. **GYPSY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **HAIRSPRAY:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100. **IN THE HEIGHTS:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200. **JERSEY BOYS:** August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200. **JOLLYSHIP THE WHIZ-BANG:** Ars Nova, 511 W. 54th St. 212-868-4444. **JUMP:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-307-4100. **LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4100. **LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES:** American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. Through July 6. **THE LION KING:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4747. **THE LITTLE MERMAID:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747. **MARY POPPINS:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4747. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **NOVEMBER:** Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. Through July 13. **PASSING STRANGE:** Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **REASONS TO BE PRETTY:** Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200. Through July 5. **SOUTH PACIFIC:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. **SPRING AWAKENING:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **THE 39 STEPS:** Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **THURGOOD:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100. **XANADU:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

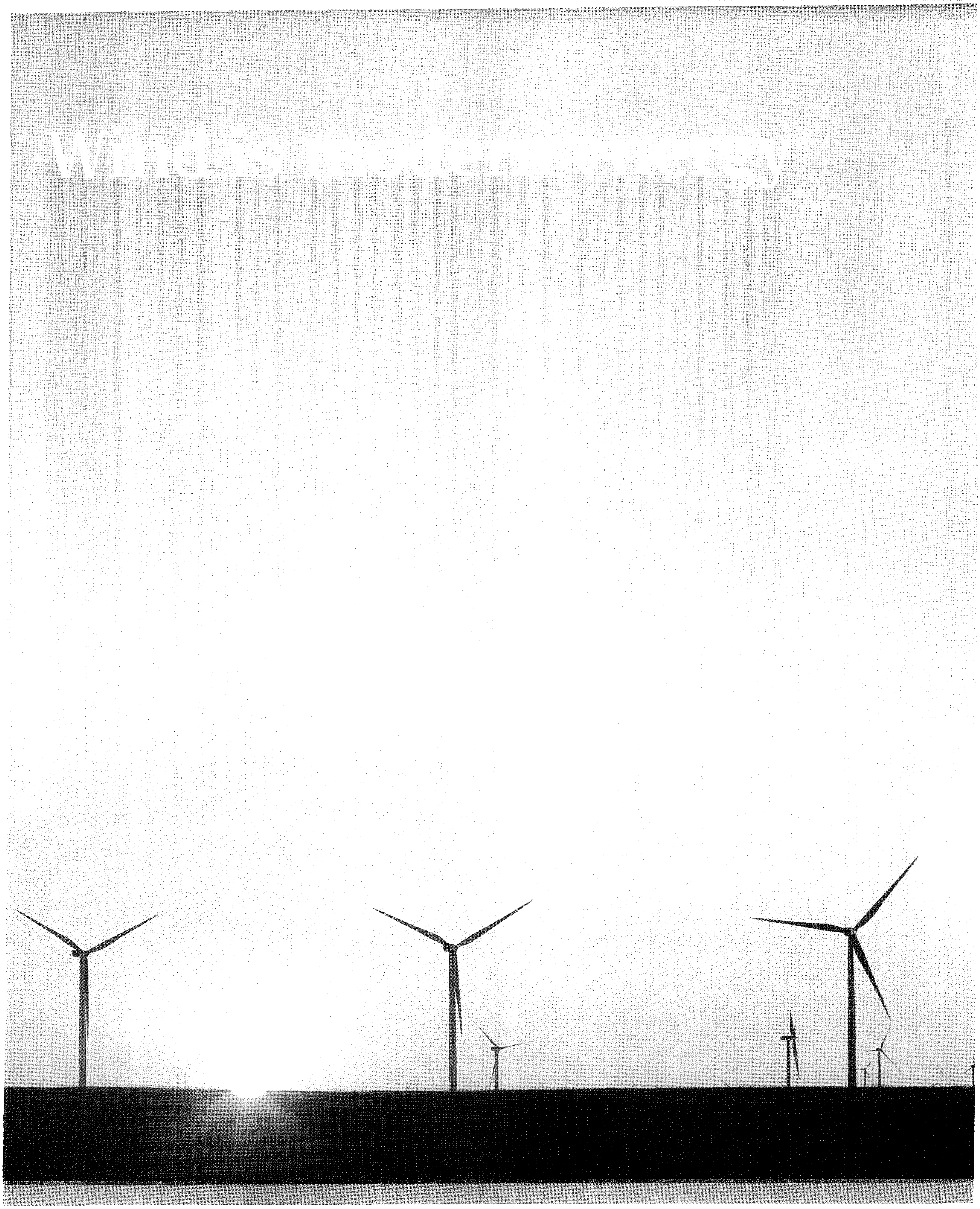
NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

"AFRO-PUNK"
This annual festival features film screenings at the Brooklyn Academy of Music along with concerts by a number of bands in a newly built skate park outside the academy. The festival also includes a compelling concert in Fort Greene Park, with the **Nosiettes,** the **Dirtbombs, Tamar Kali, Little Jackie,** and others on July 12. (For more information, visit www.afropunk.com. July 4-13.)

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—July 8: **George Clinton and the P-Funk All-Stars** remind us that we're all one nation under a groove. July 10: The raucous sounds of New Orleans's **ReBirth Brass Band.** July 13: **Suffocation,** a long-running death-metal ensemble from Long Island, has earned a cult following, yet, after nearly two decades of existence, mainstream acceptance seems out of reach. With such songs as "Entrails of You," "Bind Torture Kill," and "Depths of Depravity," it's safe to assume that crossing over was never the plan to begin with.

CELEBRATE BROOKLYN!
Prospect Park Band Shell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. (718-855-7882, ext. 45)—July 10: The reggae crooner **Freddie McGregor.** July 11: The electro-pop sounds of New York City's own **Brazilian Girls** and others. July 12: The English singer-songwriter **Beth Orton.** With the jazz guitarist **Matt Munisteri.**



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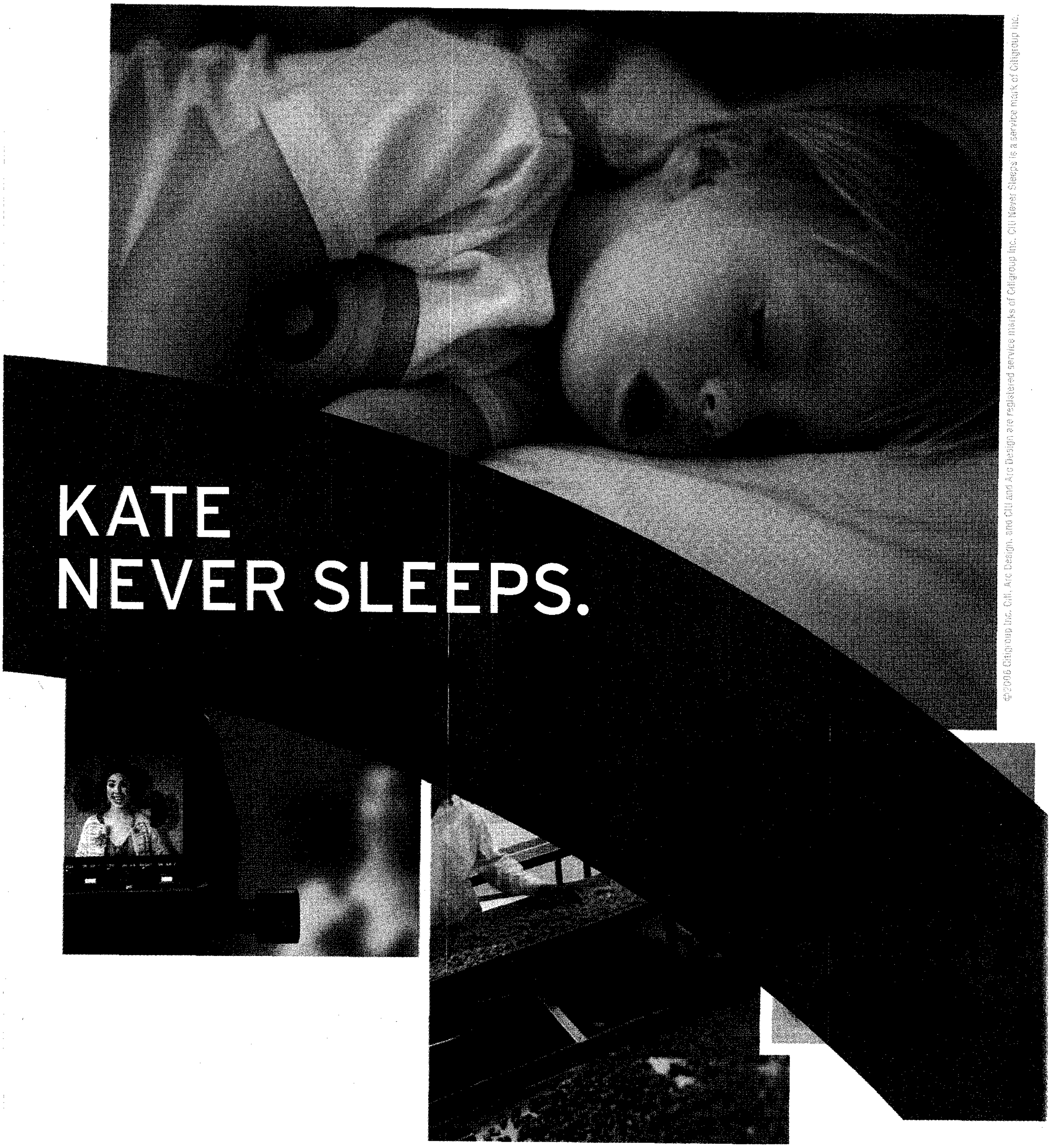
KATE
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Dreams. Realities.

After an evening of tantrums that shook the walls, Kate has finally begun to dream. >>> But down the hall, her father wonders how he'll afford to send her to college, while her mother considers a larger home. >>> Downtown, Kate's overworked pediatrician ponders an early retirement. >>> In Bentonville, a shipment of Kate's favorite peas arrives at the baby food bottling plant. >>> And in Sydney, a sing-along DVD is being filmed, one that'll provide Kate's grateful parents with a brand-new lullaby.

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CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
DIONYSIAN DARLING

When Euripides' "The Bacchae" premièred, in 405 B.C., it took the Dionysia prize. Since then, the tragedy has been interpreted by authors as diverse as Joe Orton and Wole Soyinka. Certainly Tennessee Williams must have been inspired by the

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

work, too, given its central premise: a young god named Dionysus, hungry to be acknowledged as a deity by the mortals whose blood runs through his veins as well—his late mother was one of Zeus' unacknowledged lovers—drives a number of earthbound women into a frenzy, thus demonstrating his power in both the mortal and the mythic realms. As a kind of confused, vengeful stud, Dionysus is a difficult part to pull off without seeming preachy or self-righteous, or both. But with Alan Cumming heading the National Theatre of Scotland's production at Lincoln Center, July 2-13, Dionysus is bound to be more complex and more humorous than we've seen before: a bad boy with the balls to spout some of the most beautiful poetry extant while looking tough and delectable, all at once.

—Hilton Als

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE
Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. (212-360-2777)—July 5: The Algerian-French rocker **Rachid Taha**. With **Dengue Fever**, a polyethnic six-piece band out of Los Angeles that plays trippy Cambodian pop songs from the sixties. July 6: The Nigerian Afro-beat star **Seun Kuti**, son of Fela, and his dad's twenty-piece band, **Egypt 80**. With the hip-hop innovator **Afrika Bambaataa**.

FILLMORE NEW YORK AT IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—July 11: The **Zombies**. This British Invasion band was certainly overshadowed by the Kinks and the Yardbirds, but it nonetheless deserves credit for its contribution to American popular culture. A few songs from its sixties heyday are radio staples, notably the haunting "She's Not There" and "Time of the Season." The vocalist Colin Blunstone and the keyboardist Rod Argent, the mainstays of the original Zombies, have recently resurrected the band. July 13: The **English Beat**, perhaps the most accessible band from the ska-revival scene of late-seventies Britain (where they were known as the Beat), had a multiracial lineup, a punky edge, and a knack for high-energy pop. In the early eighties, their radio-friendly tracks "Mirror in the Bathroom" and "Save It for Later" made them MTV darlings. Twenty-five years after the band broke up, an incarnation of the English Beat carries on, with only the vocalist and guitarist Dave Wakeling remaining from the original group.

HIGHLINE BALLROOM
431 W. 16th St. (212-414-5994)—July 2: The clever Italian pop singer and multi-instrumentalist **Vinicio Capossela**, who has a raspy voice and a rabid sense of humor, often changes costumes in performance and always constructs dramatic narratives that need no translation. July 12: The "F Yeah Tour" is an ambitious undertaking co-curated by Keith Morris, the fabled screamer of Los Angeles's punk legends the Circle Jerks. Featuring bands and comedians from across the spectrum, the tour's endearingly gritty aesthetic recalls the early days of Lollapalooza. The lineup includes the **Circle Jerks**, the **Dillinger Four, Matt and Kim, Team Robespierre**, and **Monotonix.**

HILL COUNTRY
30 W. 26th St. (212-255-4544)—July 11: The Austin-based songwriter **Bruce Robison**, who has written hits for the likes of Faith Hill and Tim McGraw, George Strait, and the Dixie Chicks, offers a preview of his forthcoming album, "The New World."

JONES BEACH THEATRE
Wantagh, N.Y. (212-307-7171)—July 8: **Mötley Crüe**. If everything written about the Los Angeles metal institution were true, its members would be dead, or at the very least in a state of severe disrepair, such is their legend. But that's not the case, and they are touring with **Buckcherry, Papa Roach**, and other also-rans from the nineties. July 14: The dizzyingly versatile and tirelessly prolific Canadian rock institution **Rush** shows no signs of slowing down.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3132)—July 3: The old-school hardcore favorites **Murphy's Law**, led by the affably obnoxious Jimmy Gestapo, and others ring in "Skindependence Day."

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL
Damon Albarn & the Honest Jon's Revue is a promising one-off of an evening featuring the former Blur front man and three performers from Mali—the mesmerizing singer and guitarist **Afel Bocoum**, who collaborated for a long time with the late Ali Farka Touré; **Kokanko Sata**, a master of the *kamelen n'goni*, a lute that women in her country are not typically taught to play; and the blues guitarist **Lobi Traoré**—along with two acts from this country, the exciting **Hypnotic Brass Ensemble**, which currently operates out of New York City, and the charming folksinger **Simone White**, from Venice, California. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5030. July 12.)

MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING
The annual dancing under the stars at Lincoln Center starts this week. The action is taking place not on Fountain Plaza, the traditional location, which is a sea of construction owing to the center's ongoing renovations, but rather in nearby Damrosch Park. There's still a dance floor, though, and lessons preceding the shows. July 8: The energetic and enterprising vocalist **Nellie McKay** has a go at fronting a swing band. July 9: **Chuck Brown**, the Godfather of Go-Go, brings in the funk. July 10: **Michael Arenella & His Dreamland Orchestra**, fresh off of taking dancers back to the Roaring Twenties at their dance party on Governors Island earlier this summer. July 11: The **Loser's Lounge** break out the polyester for a night of seventies disco. July 12: Salsa and mambo with **Dante Vargas & the Cat Band.** July 15: The **Alan Gresik Swing Shift Orchestra**, a powerful ensemble out of Chicago, makes its New York City début. (For more information, visit www.lincolncenter.org.)

(LE) POISSON ROUGE
158 Bleecker St. (212-796-0741)—July 10: The percussionist Sean Noonan is full of musical wanderlust. His band **Brewed by Noon** embraces progressive jazz, fusion, rock, and folk traditions from such distant points as Mali (it includes the guitarist and vocalist Abdoulaye Diabate) and Ireland (the singer Susan McKeown is also on board.) The guitarist Marc Ribot (no stranger to toying with language and genres—check out his band Los Cubanos Postizos) and the bassists Jamaaladeen Tacuma and Thierno Camara round out the group. Another of Noonan's bands, the jazz-punk trio the **Hub**, is also performing. July 14: **A Hawk and a Hacksaw**, which is led by the Neutral Milk Hotel drummer Jeremy Barnes and the violinist Heather Trost and features Chris Hladowski, on bouzouki, clarinet, and viola, and Ferenc Kovács, on trumpet and violin, embraces Balkan folk music.

REGGAE CARIFEST
Lee (Scratch) Perry, Matisyahu, Eek-a-Mouse, and many other island-oriented acts bring the sounds of Kingston to town. (Arthur Ashe Stadium, Flushing Meadows Park, Queens. 212-307-7171. July 6.)

RIVER TO RIVER FESTIVAL
July 4: **Sonic Youth.** With the **Feelies.** New York City's fabled alternative underground bands celebrate Independence Day in Battery Park. The noise-rock veterans Sonic Youth, with their patented blend of edgy austerity and dissonant guitar art, get top billing, but the real news is the return of the Feelies, who are back together for the first time since their 1991 demise. The comparatively unsung but seminal band's frenetic, jangle-heavy guitars, jittery rhythms, and unabashedly geeky aesthetic have inspired a generation of acolytes, from Yo La Tengo through Luna and beyond. Expect ironic indie-rock fans to positively well up. July 9: The **Avett Brothers**, a pair of siblings from North Carolina and a friend, play with abandon, injecting new life into timeless roots music. July 10: Annie Clark, who has backed the Polyphonic Spree and Sufjan Stevens, records and performs as **St. Vincent.** She has a lilting voice and a wry pop sensibility, and her efforts have earned her the acclaim of the independent-music community—last year she was anointed Female Artist of the Year at the Plug Music Awards, for which fans vote online to determine the winners. (Castle Clinton.) (For more information, visit www.rivertorivernyc.com.)

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—July 5: **RZA**, the genius behind the Wu-Tang Clan, has dusted off his alter ego Bobby Digital for a new solo album, "Digi Snacks," and a tour featuring the band Stone Mecca backing him onstage.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—July 2-5: The **Lew Tabackin** quartet. Tabackin was once the featured soloist in the big band led by his wife, **Toshiko Akiyoshi**; this compact ensemble reverses the situation by setting the saxophonist and flutist in the foreground with Akiyoshi's piano in support. July 9-12: The tender vocals and guitar stylings of **Vinicius Cantuária.**

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—July 8-13: A double bill with the **Charles Tolliver Big Band** and the **Odean Pope Saxophone Choir.** The trumpeter Tolliver grabbed his moment of fame in the seventies but then dropped off the scene. He's back, with an ambitious full-scale ensemble that seamlessly mixes veteran and younger players. The Philadelphian saxophonist Pope—a mainstay of the late Max Roach's bands—convenes his own horn-heavy outfit.

CAFÉ CARLYLE
Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—Through July 5: The legendary vocalist **Eartha Kitt** closes out the season.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—July 8-13: The **Russell Malone** quartet. Malone can make guitar nerds drool with his hurtling technique. To his credit, though, Malone curbs his enthusiasm often enough to let in measured lyricism.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—July 3-6: **Jon Hendricks' L, H & R Redux.** With never-say-die spirit, Hendricks revives the hit-making Lambert, Hendricks & Ross vocal ensemble, with **Kevin Burke** and his daughter **Aria** subbing for Dave Lambert (who died in 1966) and Annie Ross (who is busy at the moment with her own career). July 7 and July 14: The inventive pianist **Joanne Brackeen** settles in on two consecutive Mondays. On the first, she fronts a twin saxophone quintet; on the second she's at the helm of a Brazilian-flavored quartet with the bassist **Eddie Gomez.** July 8: The French guitarist **Stephane Wrembel** picks up where Django Reinhardt left off. July 10-13: For more than fifty years, the saxophonist **John Handy** has dipped into a wide range of genres, from hard bop to fusion to world music to R. & B., quite unafraid to confound his fan base. This more traditional quintet unites him with the saxophonist **Craig Handy** and the pianist **Kenny Drew, Jr.**

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—July 1-6: The pianist **Uri Caine** has his hand in a million imaginative projects, from evoking turn-of-the-century New York ghetto life to remolding classics by composers from Bach to Mahler. Compared with those grand doings, his compact trio may seem limited in ambition, but Caine can still be expected to shake things up. July 8-13: The seventy-eight-year-old pianist **Barry Harris** is as close to a first-generation bebop master as we've got. He has a relaxed intensity that makes him stylistically more akin to the late Tommy Flanagan than to his hero, Bud Powell. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"J.M.W. Turner."** Through Sept. 1. ♦ **"Art of the Royal Court: Treasures in Pietre Dure from the Palaces of Europe."** Through Sept. 21. ♦ **"Superheroes: Fashion and Fantasy."** Through Sept. 1. ♦ **"Medieval and Renaissance Treasures from the Victoria and Albert Museum."** Like stars vying for attention at a gala, each work here threatens to outshine the one before it. A luscious boxwood statuette, "The Virgin as Woman of the Apocalypse Treading on the Moon" (a title lifted from the Book of Revelations), dazzles the eye, until one glimpses an ivory crucifix by Giovanni Pisano and a gilt-copper-and-enamel reliquary that may have held the remains of Thomas Becket. An ivory cover of the Lorsch Gospels, from the church patronized by Charlemagne, competes with Donatello's bronze putto with fish, made for a Medici garden fountain. The showstopper might be the Leonardo da Vinci codex, in which the quintessential Renaissance man penned mathematical calculations. Through Aug. 17. ♦ **"Framing a Century: Master Photographs, 1840-1940."** Through Sept. 1. ♦ **"Jeff Koons on the Roof."** Through Oct. 26. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Dalí: Painting and Film."** Through Sept. 15. ♦ **"Bernd and Hilla Becher: Landscape/Topology."** Through Aug. 25. ♦ **"Glossolalia: Languages of Drawing."** Through July 7. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Louise Bourgeois."** Through Sept. 28. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 7:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—**"Buckminster Fuller: Starting with the Universe."** Through Sept. 21. ♦ **"Polaroids: Mapplethorpe."** Through Sept. 7. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"© Murakami."** Through July 13. ♦ **"Ghada Amer: Love Has No End."** Through Oct. 19. ♦ **"Click! A Crowd-Curated Exhibition."** Through Aug. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"The Horse."** Through Jan. 4, 2009. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

ASIA SOCIETY
Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-288-6400)—**"Ardeshir Mohassess: Art and Satire in Iran."** Through Aug. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000)—**"Heavy Light: Recent Photography and Video from Japan."** Through Sept. 7. ♦ **"Bill Wood's Business."** Through Sept. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 10 to 6, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Action/Abstraction: Pollock, de Kooning, and American Art, 1940-1976."** Through Sept. 21. ♦ **"Warhol's Jews: Ten Portraits Reconsidered."** Through Aug. 13. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, and Thursdays, 11 to 8.)

MORGAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0008)—**"Philip Guston: Works on Paper."** Through Aug. 31. ♦ **"Illuminating the Medieval Hunt."** Through Aug. 10. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-369-4880)—**"The 183rd Annual."** A visit to Chelsea will turn up plenty of "academic" art these days, but the academies in question are Conceptualist-leaning M.F.A. programs (like those found at Columbia or Cal Arts). Little in this invitational show of works by a hundred and thirty American artists looks cutting-edge, but there is good work by Elizabeth Marran (small colorful abstractions), Leonardo Drew (prints made with rust on paper), Lisha Bai (a black-and-white Op-Art-ish linoleum floor installation), and veteran painters including Pat Lipsky, Barbara Takenaga, Julie Heffernan, Sean Scully, and David Reed. Soo Sunny Park's wall-penetrating installation, which looks a bit like 3-D monochrome camouflage, is also a standout. Through Sept. 7. (Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon to 5, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM
235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222)—**"Altoids Award: Ei Arakawa, Lauren Kelley, Michael Patterson-Carver, and Michael Stickrod."** Through Oct. 12. ♦ **"Double Album: Daniel Guzmán and Steven Shearer."** Through July 6.

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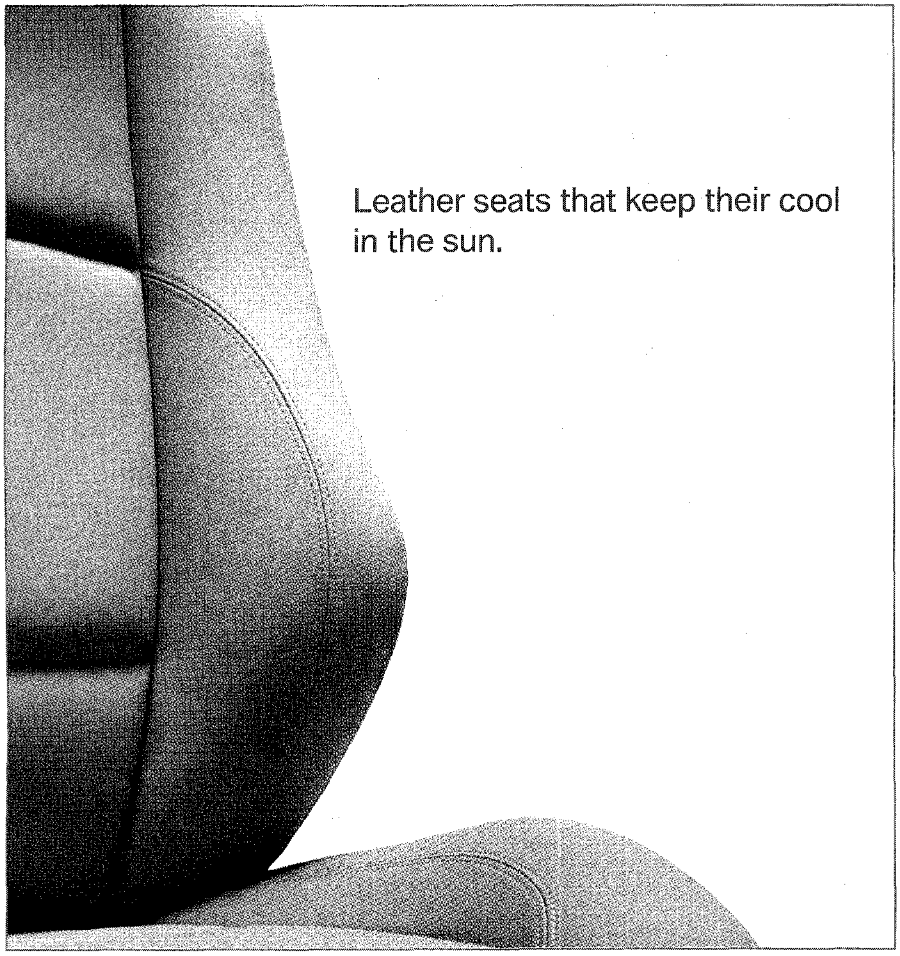


(Open Wednesdays and weekends, noon to 6, and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 10.)

NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN
Bronx River Parkway at Fordham Rd., the Bronx (718-817-8700)—**"Moore in America."** Through Nov. 2. ♦ **"Darwin's Garden: An Evolutionary Adventure."** Through July 20. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)— **"Arctic Hysteria: New Art from Finland."** Through Sept. 15. ♦ **"Public Farm One."** Through Sept. 8. ♦ **"James Turrell's Meeting."** The artist's "skyspace" installation will be open at sunset on Saturdays. Through Sept. 6. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

MASAO MOCHIZUKI
The photographs in Mochizuki's first U.S. gallery show, shot in the mid-seventies, capture news reports and documentary programs on Japanese television. The topics of these broadcasts are varied—a historic baseball game, a profile of Salvador Dali, Queen Elizabeth's visit to Tokyo—but Mochizuki's subject is really the screen itself, seen over and over in dense, busy grids that suggest media crazy quilts. Each composite image represents a single program in a sequence full of repetition and interruption—an hour or two compressed into a frantic highlight reel of a picture that sometimes ends in a peaceful, welcome pileup of blank gray screens. Through July 11. (Cohen Amador, 41 E. 57th St. 212-759-6740.)

"COSMOLOGICAL EMBEDDEDNESS"
This engagingly eccentric group show, subtitled "The Flying Spaghetti Monster," is intended to tweak the adherents of intelligent design, but its array of scientific, documentary, and just plain strange photographs would challenge (and entertain) any viewer. Tom Deernick's microscopic images of the retina, the hippocampus, and penicillin look like drawings made under the influence of LSD, and Jerry Spagnoli's woozy view down an urban street is just as trippy. But even the seemingly straightforward images here (such as Barbara Crane's photograph of amputated monkey hands, raised in mute appeal) have a destabilizing effect. Faith and skepticism meet for a stoned soul picnic, and we're invited. Through July 3. (Higher Pictures, 764 Madison Ave., at 65th St. 212-249-6100.)

"LOOKING BACK"
Each piece in this low-key show of mostly small works by twelve artists nods to a titan of art history. Nina Pohl's color photograph enlarges a bravura detail of a Courbet landscape, but allows a flash of light (reflecting off the varnish) to obscure the image. Molly Springfield replicates, in pencil, pages from a John Ruskin book about drawing. Reference broadens to spoof in Harvey Opgenorth's self-portrait, a series of photographs titled "Museum Camouflage," in which the artist dresses to blend into paintings by Henri Matisse, Helen Frankenthaler, and Christopher Wool. Through July 26. (Mosler, 35 E. 67th St. 212-249-4195.)

Short List

FRANCESCO CLEMENTE: Gallery Met, Metropolitan Opera House. 212-870-7457. Through July 14. **JESS:** De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-262-5050. Through July 31. **"DEEP COMEDY":** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 212-977-7160. Through July 30.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

ARMLEDER / MOSSET / STEINBACH
Like Urs Fischer and Gavin Brown's much talked-about extravaganza at Shafrazi, this small show collapses the boundaries between art and its context. John Armleder's vertically striped painting hangs

on metallic wallpaper, erasing distinctions between culture and décor. Olivier Mosset's grid of six canvases slathered with pebbly, waterproof coating is a hybrid of art and industry. In Haim Steinbach's installation, the auctioneer's cry of "Going, going, gone" is printed vertically along a wall; adjacent to the text, "The Critic 2," one of the artist's signature shelf sculptures, supports a row of black objects, including a critique of critics in the form of a pointy black hat. Through Aug. 31. (Klagsbrun, 526 W. 26th St. 212-243-3335.)

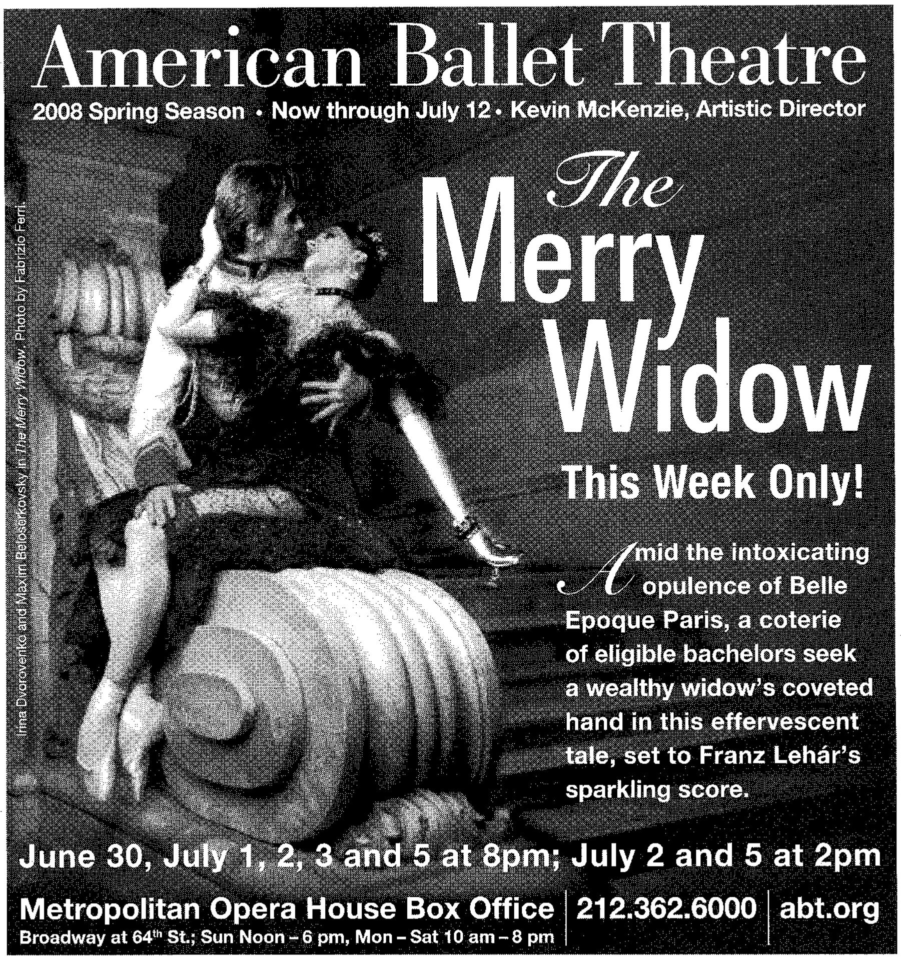
HARRY DODGE AND STANYA KAHN
In the Los Angeles-based duo's twenty-six-minute video, "All Together Now," a mute tribe of hunter-gatherers with dirty faces and purple shirts squats in a boutique hotel. (The scene suggests a post-apocalyptic world, but corporate logos top silver skyscrapers outside.) Another group, the identities of its members obscured by blue hoods, dwells underground and spends its time in obscure activities (distilling water? washing sticks?). In the related video "Masters of None," a pink-hooded tribe lives in a bungalow and practices improvisational kick-line routines. Dodge and Kahn's anti-narratives, with their oneiric internal logic, suggest an expression of the collective unconscious—scary, absurd, and beguiling. Through Aug. 2. (Dee Gallery, 545 W. 20th St. 212-924-7545.)

PAUL FUSCO
On June 8, 1968, Fusco, a photographer with the Magnum agency, who was stationed on the train that carried Bobby Kennedy's body from New York to Washington, D.C., took some two thousand color pictures of people who had gathered beside the tracks to pay their respects. The crowds that thronged station platforms and urban intersections thinned out in the countryside, where a woman with a child on her hip or two boys saluting might be the only witnesses. Although Fusco caught all of his subjects in passing, his photos here (including many that have not been exhibited before) never feel tossed off. Sweet, grave, and touching, the work is irresistible. Through July 31. (Danziger, 521 W. 26th St. 212-629-6778.)

PHILIPPE GRONON
The French photographer's American début consists of eight pieces: pictures of two elevator doors, a card catalogue, and five vintage wall safes. Reproduced to scale and presented unframed, the images have a suave trompe-l'oeil quality—the safes look like they were installed in the gallery—underscored by Gronon's attention to design and a fetish for patina. Although the card catalogue is from the Vatican Library, it's less intriguing than the scratched and battered service-elevator door from one of Chelsea's biggest art warrens, the conveyance of so many inflated egos and dashed hopes. Through July 11. (Milo, 525 W. 25th St. 212-414-0370.)

ROBERT THERRIEN
Therrien's objects are as mundane as they come—soup bowls, cooking pots, folding tables and chairs. So why do visitors laugh out loud when they see them? Because his sculptures are rendered at a Brobdingnagian scale. One work offers an optical illusion: the stack of bowls seems to swivel as viewers walk past. But a room filled with card tables and chairs is even more magical, transporting the viewer back to childhood, when the world was thrillingly new and outsized. The show wouldn't work without Therrien's attention to detail—even the jumbo hinges on the tables and chairs are fully functional. Through July 11. (Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-6741-1111.)

JANE AND LOUISE WILSON
The British twin sisters substitute photographs and a sound installation for their signature medium of film. The pictures capture the interior of an antiquarian bookshop in London and the doorway-like openings in manicured foliage on the grounds of Sudeley Castle, in Gloucestershire, England. Pealing church bells—and the droning, sucking sound of the same audio track played in reverse—accompany the images. Jean Cocteau's film "Orphée" and Stanley Kubrick are among the Wilsons' purported references here; while visitors are unlikely to deduce as much on their own, the show does have the haunting air of dismantled cinema, with aural



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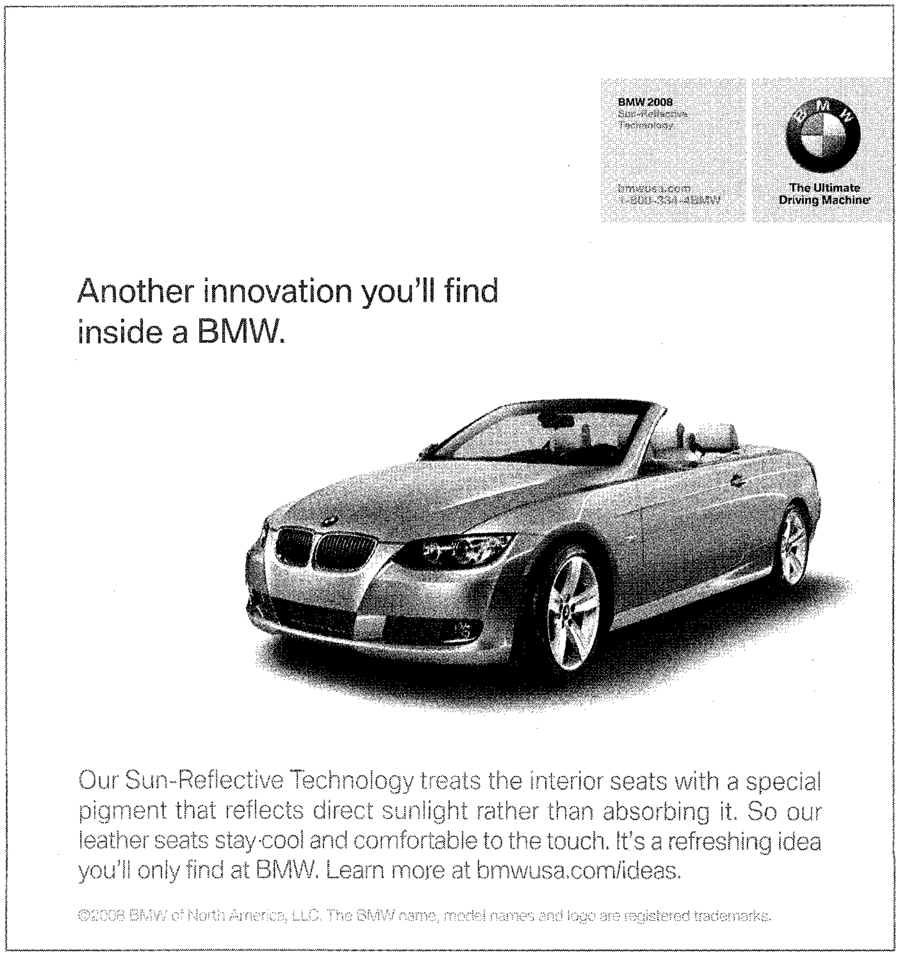
Irina Dvorovenko and Maxim Beloserkovsky in *The Merry Widow*. Photo by Fabrizio Ferri.



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and visual elements separated and set on parallel paths. Through Aug. 2. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121.)

"GEOMETRY AS IMAGE"
Like art, geometry is concerned with the size, shape, and position of objects in space. Not surprisingly, sculpture seems best suited to the subject in this group show, despite the presence of fine paintings by Mel Bochner, Al Held, and Andrew Spence and a spooky architectural photograph by Mayumi Terada. Ilya Bolotowsky's painted construction looks like a folding Mondrian. John Duff playfully riffs on the minimalist cube in plaster and steel. The newcomer Nils Folke Anderson's interlocking polystyrene squares suggest a mechanical puzzle—an all-white Rubik's Cube, in which every combination is the right one. Through July 30. (Robert Miller, 524 W. 26th St. 212-366-4774.)

Short List

FIA BACKSTRÖM: White Columns, 320 W. 13th St. 212-924-4212. Through July 26. **TETSUMI KUDO:** Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 212-627-6000. Through Aug. 15. **"IDLE YOUTH":** Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 212-206-9300. Through Aug. 15. **"NOT SO SUBTLE SUBTITLE":** Kaplan, 525 W. 21st St. 212-645-7335. Through Aug. 1. **"PAINTING NOW AND FOREVER, PART II":** Greene Naftali, 508 W. 26th St. 212-463-7770; Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 212-243-1650. Opens July 2. **"SOME THING ELSE":** Blum, 526 W. 29th St. 212-244-6055. Through Aug. 1. **"STANDARD SIZES":** Kreps, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-741-8849. Through July 12. **"WHO'S AFRAID OF JASPER JOHNS?":** Shafrazi, 544 W. 26th St. 212-274-9300. Through July 12.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

LALEH KHORRAMIAN
Khorramian's latest animated film was inspired by Louise Bourgeois's oft-relayed anecdote about her father carving an orange peel into the shape of a person. In this seven-minute drama, two orange-peel figures engage in awkward, if surprisingly tender, relations. The resemblance of the figures to actual human beings is intermittent at best, but closeups reveal an arresting similarity between peel and skin. Scenes of the fruit people drying and "dying" are giddily comic, reminiscent of another live-action figure, Gumby. Through July 12. (Salon 94 Freemans, 1 Freeman Alley. 646-672-9212.)

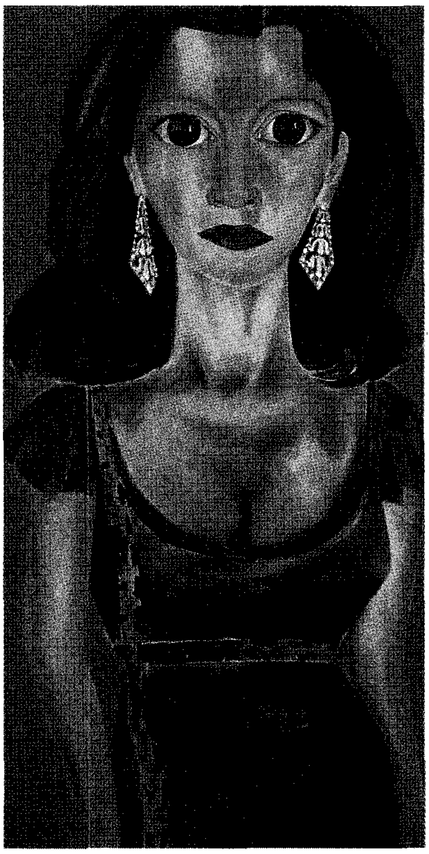
Short List

VITO ACCONCI: Albion, 102 Prince St. 212-343-3959. Through Aug. 1. **FRANCISCO DE GOYA:** Blum, 99 Wooster St. 212-343-0441. Through Aug. 1. **"NO WAVE":** KS Art, 73 Leonard St. 212-219-9918. Through July 31.

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
The men are dashing, the women are delightfully frisky, and there are enough waltzes to satisfy every taste in Ronald Hynd's 1975 ballet remake of Franz Léhar's beloved turn-of-the-century operetta "The Merry Widow." The story—which hinges on the schemes to marry off a wealthy widow to a count from a fictional Balkan country (cue the colorful national dances in Act II)—is pure fluff, but the catchy melodies and froufrou sets and costumes are satisfying, as is the urbane, witty tone. The season closes with "Giselle," in which spiritual love is the only path to salvation. Julie Kent's interpretation of the role is ethereal and elegiac, while that of Nina Ananiashvili (who's retiring next year) is wild-eyed and tragic, and Diana Vishneva's suggests a girlish eroticism. Casts, which are subject to change, appear on the company's Web site. ♦ July 1 and July 3 at 8 and July 2 and July 5 at 2 and 8: "The Merry Widow." ♦ July 7-8 and July 10-11 at 8 and July 9 and July 12 at 2 and 8: "Giselle." (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

PILOBOLUS
During its annual residency at the Joyce, the company presents three repertory programs plus three new pieces, including "Lanterna Magica," by Michael Tracy, and "Darkness and Light," a collaboration with the imaginative puppeteer Basil Twist. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. July 1-2, July 7-9, and July 14-15 at 7:30; July 3 and July 10-11 at 8; July 4 at 5; and July 5 and July 12 at 2 and 8. Through July 26.)



"Angela Gheorghiu as Magda," by Francesco Clemente, at Gallery Met.

RISA JAROSLOW & DANCERS
The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's "Sitelines" series places Jaroslow, known for combining trained dancers with average folk, beneath the arches of the Municipal Building. Her "311," performed at lunchtime, queries passersby on their feelings about local government, then incorporates their responses into the dance. (1 Centre St. 212-219-9401. July 7-8, July 10-11, and July 14-15 at noon and 1:30.)

SUMMERDANZ FESTIVAL
Gotham Arts Exchange's new festival offers a mix of established modern-dance companies and emerging artists. Paradigm, created by the dance legends Gus Solomons, Jr., Carmen deLavallade, and Dudley Williams, offers one piece by the adventurous young Jonah Bokaer, and one by Larry Keigwin. Zenon, from Minneapolis, marks its twenty-fifth anniversary with dances by Bebe Miller, Séan Curran, and Wynn Fricke. A mixed bill brings together four young choreographers, from Camille A. Brown to Jessy Smith. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Paradigm: July 8-10 at 7:30. Zenon: July 11-12 at 7:30 and July 13 at 2. Emerging artists: July 14-15 at 7:30. Through July 19.)

"TAP CITY"
The annual tap festival shuffles over to Symphony Space this year, with two evenings of professional variety programs surfacing in between multiple kids' shows and participant showcases. "Professional" means, mostly, the best in the business, which is skewing young these days. Tuesday's "Tap Forward" program features a tribute to Derick K. Grant, whose "Imagine Tap," not yet seen here, is thus far the tap show of the decade. For Friday's "Tap and Song," Sarah Petronio flies in from Paris to help honor her mentor, the great Jimmy Slyde, who died in May. (Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. July 8-11 at 8.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA
Lovers of *flamenco puro* look forward to the summer, when Noche Flamenca and its extraordinary star, Soledad Barrio, take up residence in the East Village. Adherence to the tradition of musicians and dancers in intense conversation keeps things much the same from year to year, with a new piece for variety. This year it's "El Mar," which finds a parallel between flamenco's scream from the gut and the heroine's struggles in Ibsen's "Lady from the Sea." (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Marks Pl. 212-352-3101. July 9-11 at 8, July 12 at 2 and 8, and July 13 at 2 and 5. Through Aug. 14.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW
Lar Lubovitch kicks off the company's fortieth-anniversary tour at the Ted Shawn Theatre, July 2-6, with one of his best-loved works, "Concerto Six Twenty-Two." The piece, from 1986, set to Mozart's heart-rending clarinet concerto, includes a lyrical male duet inspired by the death of one of Lubovitch's closest friends from AIDS. ♦ July 3-6, the Doris Duke Theatre goes in the round, as the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company presents "Chapel/Chapter." ♦ July 9-13, the company of the Israeli-born Hofesh Shechter, one of the most talked-about young choreographers in London, has its U.S. début. The six men in Shechter's "Uprising" are a gang, a tribe, a pack; in chiaroscuro, they fight and bond and scamper on their knuckles and haunches like monkeys to a throbbing score by the choreographer. Shechter's "In Your Rooms" is also tribal, but adds women and a theme of miscommunication. ♦ July 10-13, two contrasting Japanese troupes share a double bill. In Ko & Edge's Butoh-based "Dead 1," three nearly naked men balance on their shoulders, legs high. Very slowly, the legs wilt and grow, the men learn to wobble on two feet—evolution in twenty minutes. Natural Dance Theatre's "Alice" takes its title and license for whimsy from Lewis Carroll, delivering a theatrically polished child's fantasy of super-long braids and balletic leg extensions. (Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. For a complete schedule, visit www.jacobspillow.org. Through Aug. 24.)

MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP
Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet"—not the Soviet-censored version that everyone knows, but the composer's original vision, complete with happy ending, recently discovered and now realized in a ballet by Mark Morris—sounds extremely promising. The highly anticipated "Romeo & Juliet, on Motifs of Shakespeare" premières at Bard SummerScape, in two alternating casts from Morris's company. Leon Botstein conducts the American Symphony Orchestra. (Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7926. July 4 at 8, July 5 at 2 and 8, July 6 at 3, and July 8-9 at 8.)

MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY/"BEACON EVENT"
At the former Nabisco plant of the Dia: Beacon, on stages set amidst large-scale contemporary art, these almost superhuman dancers perform Cunningham's spare, limpid movement phrases. This time, the dancing happens in the space around Richard Serra's imposing "Torqued Ellipses" and one of his torqued spirals. (Beacon, N.Y. 845-440-0100, ext. 45. July 5 at 2 and July 6 at 2 and 4:30.)

COURTESY DEITCH PROJECTS

CLASSICAL MUSIC

CONCERTS IN TOWN

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC: "SUMMERTIME CLASSICS"
The avuncular British conductor Bramwell Tovey once again brings his light but knowing touch (and his Pythonesque shtick) to the orchestra's early-summer series, held in the air-conditioned confines of Avery Fisher Hall. Tovey's final program—a collaboration between the orchestra and the formidable U.S. Military Academy Band—features not only favorite works by Copland (the "Four Dance Episodes," from "Rodeo") and Sousa but also the world première of his own "Urban Runway," a co-commission with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. (212-875-5656. July 3 at 7:30 and July 4 at 3.) ♦ Tovey also leads the Philharmonic in a new venture—a concert held on the Parade Grounds of Governors Island, an increasingly active place for the arts. The program features festive music by Copland, Rossini, and Rimsky-Korsakov ("Capriccio Espagnole"), along with Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture"; both the concert and the ferry ride to get there are free. (July 5 at 6:30. No tickets required.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC "CONCERTS IN THE PARKS"
Alongside its more recent endeavors, the Philharmonic has kept its traditional round of free parks concerts going. The next program, conducted by its associate conductor, Xian Zhang, offers Bach's Double Concerto in D Minor (featuring two of the ensemble's leading violinists, Sheryl Staples and Michelle Kim) as well as works by Mozart and Elgar (the "Enigma Variations"). (Richmond Country Bank Ballpark, Staten Island. July 8. ♦ PNC Bank Arts Center, Holmdel, N.J. July 9. ♦ Cunningham Park, Queens. July 10. ♦ Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. July 11.) ♦ Alan Gilbert, the orchestra's music director designate, takes the podium for the final two concerts. In the first, Staples and Kim return for the Bach concerto, followed by Beethoven's Fourth Symphony and Sibelius's "Finlandia." (Prospect Park, Brooklyn. July 14.) ♦ In Gilbert's final concert—on the Great Lawn—the Beethoven and Sibelius works remain, preceded by Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with an exceptionally exciting soloist, Lang Lang). (Central Park. July 15.) (All concerts begin at 8. No tickets required. For more information, see www.nyphil.org.)

BARGEMUSIC
July 3 at 8: A distinguished jazz duo—the guitarists Howard Alden and Bucky Pizzarelli—begins two weeks of concerts at the floating chamber-music series. ♦ July 4 at 7: After the Voxare Quartet performs favorite works by Mozart and Dvořák (the Quartet in F Major, "American"), the audience can ascend to the roof to better watch the Fourth of July fireworks in the harbor. ♦ July 5 at 8 and July 6 at 4: Piano-trio concerts—often fronted by the series' director, Mark Peskanov—are de rigueur at the barge these days. In the next, the cellist Edward Arron and the pianist Jeewon Park join the violinist in trios by Haydn (No. 25, the "Gypsy"), Beethoven, and Dvořák ("Dumky"). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083. For full schedule, see www.bargemusic.org.)

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL: "DIE SOLDATEN"
Bernd Alois Zimmermann's scabrous antiwar opera is both a reverent continuation of the nineteen-thirties expressionism of Berg's "Lulu" and a product of the expanded possibilities of multimedia—and of the accumulated experience of horror—that only postwar Europe could provide. The renowned Ruhr Triennale production, transferred to the cavernous space of the Park Avenue Armory's Drill Hall, is reportedly overwhelming in its effect; Steven Sloane conducts the Bochum Symphony (with a hugely expanded percussion section) along with a cast of forty singers, actors, and dancers, many from the original production. (Park Ave. at 67th St. 212-721-6500. July 5, July 7, July 9, and July 11-12 at 8.)

CALEFAX
An engagingly atypical reed quintet from Holland—playing on two clarinets along with oboe, saxophone, and bassoon—comes to the Frick Collection to offer arrangements of works by Rameau, Ravel ("Le Tombeau de Couperin"), Scriabin (a clutch of early Études), and Duke Ellington (the "Nutcracker Jazz Suite") along with Tchaikovsky's original "Ouverture Miniature." (1 E. 70th St. 212-547-0715. July 8 at 6.)

"THE MOVADO HOUR": BRENTANO STRING QUARTET
This series of just-over-an-hour concerts at the Baryshnikov Arts Center (always preceded by a stylish wine reception) is one of the runaway successes of recent classical seasons. The next features the famously brainy and elegant foursome performing quartets by Haydn (in D Minor, "Quinten") and Schumann (in A Major, Op. 41, No. 3). (450 W. 37th St. July 8 at 7. To reserve free tickets, which are required, call 917-934-4966.)

OUT OF TOWN

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL
July 3 at 7:30: Westchester's elegant festival kicks off the holiday weekend a little early, hosting a concert by the vibrant and compelling Trio Solisti which features piano trios by Ravel, Piazzolla, and Mussorgsky ("Pictures at an Exhibition," in the ensemble's own arrangement). ♦ July 5 at 8: The festival's Venetian Theatre is the venue for "Carnival in Venice," a tribute to La Serenissima engineered by the Orchestra of St. Luke's, which will offer an all-Vivaldi program featuring, of course, "The Four Seasons." ♦ July 10 at 7:30: The up-and-coming Escher String Quartet concludes its residency with a program combining quartets by Zemlinsky, Bartók (No. 3), and Dvořák (the "American") with the world première of the Quartet No. 4 by the American composer Pierre Jalbert, an acknowledged chamber-music master. ♦ July 12 at 8: Despite early skepticism, Will Crutchfield has developed a secure little bel-canto empire at Caramoor. For the sometime musicologist, authoritative texts are always favored; he conducts a performance of **"Il Barbiere di Siviglia"** that features not only some New York names in the cast (such as the tenor Barry Banks and the baritone Daniel Mobbs) but also a new edition—by the eminent Philip Gossett—that uses Rossini's lighter, original orchestration. (The performance will be repeated on July 18.) (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252. For full schedule, see www.caramoor.org.)

YELLOW BARN FESTIVAL
A week before Marlboro opens its doors, another Vermont music school and festival brings distinguished faculty (such as the violist Kim Kashkashian and the pianist Gilbert Kalish) and talented students together for public concerts. Its first program features not only canonical works by Beethoven and Ravel (the Piano Trio) but also more recent pieces by Mauricio Kagel, Zhou Long ("Folk Songs"), and Harold Meltzer ("Giraffes"). (Putney, Vt. 800-639-3819. July 4 at 8. For full schedule, see www.yellowbarn.org.)

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA
Shakespeare is all the rage at Glimmerglass this summer, with four Bard-based works performed on a single set (by John Conklin) inspired by the playwright's own Globe Theatre. July 5 at 8 and July 7 and July 13 at 2: Diane Paulus, well known for her bawdy, antihistorical style, takes **"Kiss Me, Kate"**—Cole Porter's charmingly Runyonesque treatment of "The Taming of the Shrew"—for a spin. Lisa Vroman and Brad Little, and Courtney Romano and David Larsen, are the musical's two contentious couples; David Charles Abell conducts. ♦ July 6 and July 14 at 2 and July 12 at 8: Handel's **"Giulio Cesare"** marks a swift turn backward to the grandeur of Baroque opera. David Stern conducts a production that features Laura Vlasak Nolen singing the "pants role" of the title, with Lyubov Petrova, another singer from the Metropolitan Opera roster, as Cleopatra. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

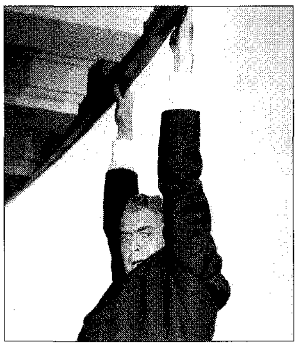
NORFOLK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
The summer outpost of the Yale School of Music offers concerts in its elegant and intimate wood-panelled Music Shed, where photographs of such

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

HEAVENLY BODIES

A few years ago, the Cinémathèque Française, in Paris, screened a vintage Technicolor print of Alfred Hitchcock's "Vertigo," made with the dye-transfer process, and it was a revelation: the deep and rich colors suggested the lurid mysticism of El Greco and the romantic darkness of Goya. The tone befits the film's San Francisco setting, steeped in the religious aura of Spanish California, as well as its story, which hints at resurrection and redemption: an acrophobic detective (James Stewart), after the apparent death of a woman he loves (Kim Novak), meets another woman who reminds him of her, dresses her up as the late object of his obsession, and then discovers that she's the same woman. It's as if Hitchcock were endowing with holy wonder the miracle by which Hollywood turns a shopgirl into a star—and by which he turns an actress into the object of his own erotic fantasy. "Vertigo" opened fifty years ago, to mixed reviews. Since then, it has become one of the most celebrated and analyzed movies of all time, perhaps because it uniquely dramatizes Hitchcock's own methods as well as the art of cinema itself.

—Richard Brody



PHOTOFEST

musicians as Sibelius and Rachmaninoff line the walls. July 5 at 8: The Tokyo String Quartet, a longtime presence here, performs quartets by Haydn and Beethoven (in F Major, Op. 135) as well as Brahms's Piano Quintet (with another old friend, the pianist Boris Berman). ♦ July 13 at 3: In a rare example of a Norfolk superstar recital, the violinist Midori comes to the Shed to offer sonatas for violin and piano by Bach (in E Minor), Shostakovich, and Respighi; Charles Abramovic accompanies her. (Norfolk, Conn. 860-542-3000. For full schedule, see www.norfolkmusic.org.)

TANGLEWOOD FESTIVAL
The supreme music festival of the summer launches its official opening weekend in grand style. July 5 at 8:30: James Levine, who has led commanding performances of Berlioz's **"Les Troyens"** at the Met (most recently in 2003), brings the mammoth proto-Wagnerian masterwork (in concert form) to the Berkshires, split in two, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra accompanying. Part I, **"The Capture of Troy,"** features Marcus Haddock, Anna Caterina Antonacci, Kate Lindsey, and Dwayne Croft (among others) in the leading roles. ♦ July 6 at 2:30: Haddock, the weekend's Aeneas, returns (along with his colleagues) after a few hours' rest to tackle Part II, **"The Trojans at Carthage,"** with Anne Sofie von Otter, a distinguished addition to the cast, singing the role of Dido. ♦ July 8 at 8:30: Keith Lockhart conducts a concert performance, by fellows of the Tanglewood Music Center, of Sondheim's **"A Little Night Music,"** with Lenox's pastoral setting adding some appropriate ambience. ♦ July 11 at 8:30: Three exceptional young artists—the violinist Julia Fischer, the cellist Daniel Müller-Schott, and the pianist Jonathan Biss—join an éminence grise, the conductor Bernard Haitink, in an all-Beethoven program with the B.S.O. featuring the "Pastoral" Symphony and the Triple Concerto. ♦ July 12 at 8:30: Haitink and the orchestra (along with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus) return for Mahler's "Resurrection" Symphony, with Heidi Grant Murphy and Christianne Stotlin as the vocal soloists. ♦ July 13 at 2:30: The B.S.O. offers a varied concert of music by Haydn (the Symphony No. 104, "London"), Bach (the Keyboard Concerto No. 1 in D Minor), Mozart, and Schubert (the Symphony No. 4, "Tragic"), with Peter Serkin at the piano and Levine conducting. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200. For complete schedule, see www.bso.org.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN
Two fine American ensembles offer concerts of beloved works at northern Connecticut's string-quartet shrine. July 6 at 3: The pianist Jonathan Yates joins the Avalon String Quartet in a program of music by Mozart (the Quartet in F Major, K. 590), Ravel, and Brahms (the Piano Quintet). ♦ July 13 at 3: The Arianna String Quartet performs Beethoven's Quartet in G Major (Op. 18, No. 2), Janáček's Quartet No. 2 ("Intimate Pages"), and Dvořák's Piano Quintet (with Vanessa Perez). (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS
This summer series' tranquil music chapel (with world-class acoustics) in the forest around Woodstock hosts a stream of vibrant performances; this season's concerts are centered on the musical worlds of Schubert and Mahler. July 6 at 4: In "Afternoon in Vienna," the Tokyo String Quartet brings its sagacious style to works by Haydn, Webern, and Beethoven (the Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132). ♦ July 13 at 4: The pianist Frederic Chiu, a series favorite, joins the up-and-coming Daedalus String Quartet in Korngold's sumptuous Piano Quintet, closing a concert that also features quartets by Mozart (in C Major, "Dissonant") and Sibelius as well as Schoenberg's astral Three Piano Pieces, Op. 11. (Woodstock, N.Y. For more information, call 845-679-8217; for full schedule, see www.maverickconcerts.org.)

MARLBORO FESTIVAL
The festival and school that Rudolf Serkin (and his close friends) built remain a bastion of chamber music at its best, with some of the world's leading musicians (including the pianists Richard Goode and Mitsuko Uchida) and their phenomenally talented protégés offering the public the results of their demanding, in-depth rehearsals. Concert programs are listed, a few days in advance, on the festival's Web site, www.marlboromusic.org. (Marlboro, Vt. 802-254-2394. July 12 at 8:30 and July 13 at 2:30. Through Aug. 10.)

MOVIES OPENING

AUGUST
A drama, directed by Austin Chick, about a businessman (Josh Hartnett) whose Wall Street company is caught in the burst dot-com bubble. Opening July 11. (Village East Cinemas.)

THE EXILES
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening July 11. (IFC Center.)

FULL BATTLE RATTLE
Tony Gerber and Jesse Moss directed this documentary, about the training of U.S. Army soldiers in a simulated Iraqi village in California. Opening July 9. (Film Forum.)

GONZO: THE LIFE AND WORK OF DR. HUNTER S. THOMPSON
A documentary about the legendary journalist, directed by Alex Gibney, co-produced by Graydon Carter. Opening July 4. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

HANCOCK
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening July 2. (In wide release.)

HELLBOY II: THE GOLDEN ARMY
Guillermo del Toro directed this futuristic fantasy, about Hellboy's fight against mythic creatures who rise up against humans. Starring Ron Perlman and Selma Blair. Opening July 11. (In wide release.)

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH
In this 3-D science-fiction fantasy, directed by Eric Brevig, a young man travels deep underground to find his geologist uncle. Starring Brendan Fraser and Josh Hutcherson. Opening July 11. (In wide release.)

MEET DAVE
Eddie Murphy stars as a spaceship disguised as an ordinary man in order to conceal the tiny space creatures it's carrying. Directed by Brian Robbins. Opening July 11. (In wide release.)

ROMAN POLANSKI: WANTED AND DESIRED
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening July 11. (Angelika Film Center.)

TELL NO ONE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening July 2. (Cinemas 1, 2, and 3 and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE WACKNESS
Jonathan Levine wrote and directed this comedy, about a troubled teen-ager who gets involved with his psychiatrist's daughter. Starring Josh Peck, Ben Kingsley, Olivia Thirlby, and Famke Janssen. Opening July 3. (In wide release.)

NOW PLAYING

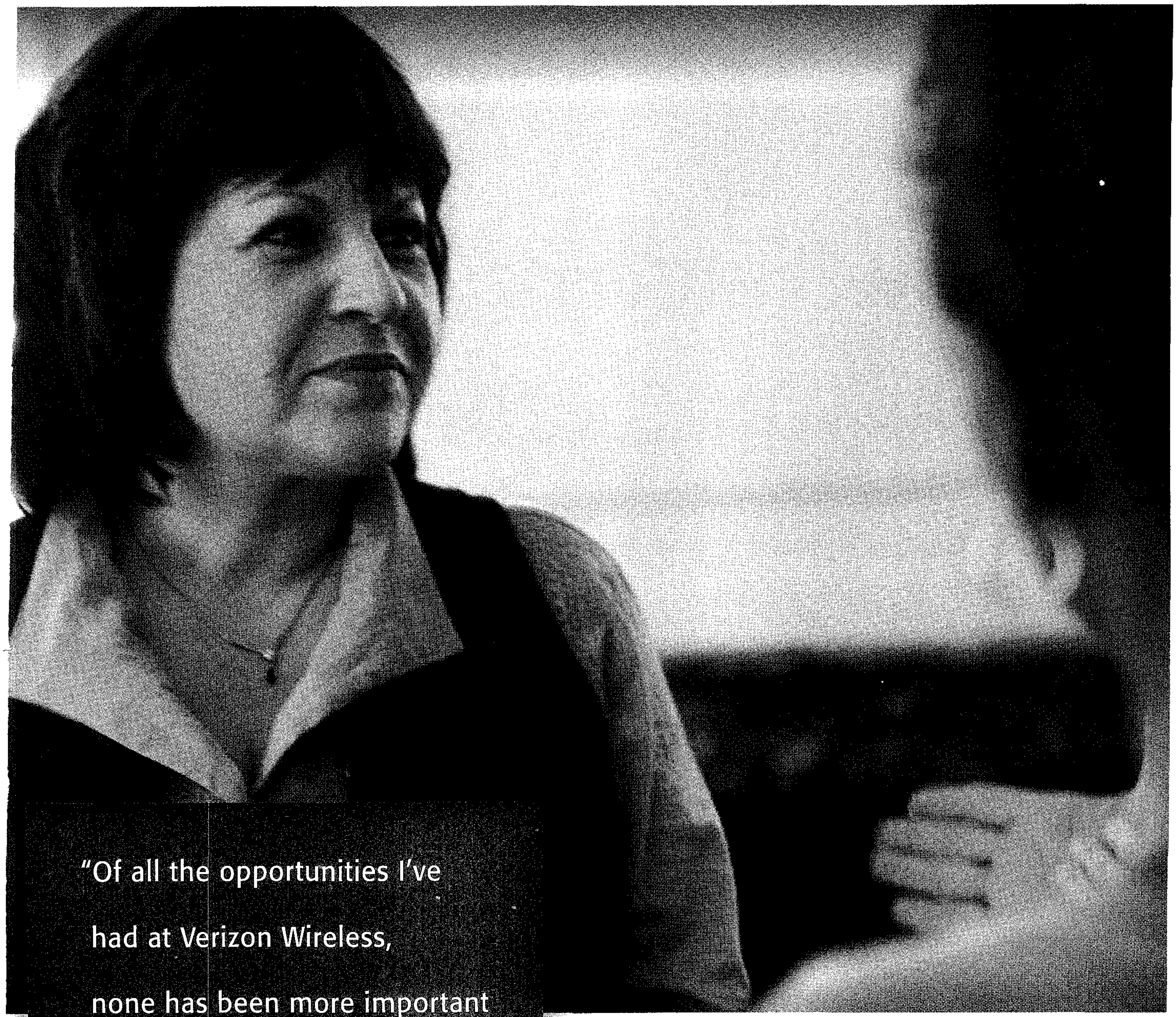
BRICK LANE
A lovely movie. If only it were a little more exciting. Nazneen (Tannishtha Chatterjee), a beautiful Bangladeshi girl who, in the nineteen-eighties, gets sent to London to marry an established businessman, settles in Brick Lane, a traditional immigrant enclave. Her good-humored but pompous husband, Chanu (Satish Kaushik), is a classic post-colonial subject—he thinks that the British will accept him if he has read the Brontës and Thackeray. Nazneen suffers under the weight of his illusions and his failure, never making her own wishes known, and then meets a handsome young man, Karim (Christopher Simpson), who grew up in London and has no illusions about anything. The first-time director Sarah Gavron, working with the cinematographer Robbie Ryan, has an appreciation of temperament and a tactile feeling for flesh that suggests extraordinary talent, but the movie is a shade cautious—it doesn't take off emotionally. Yet the tensions of an embattled immigrant community are fully realized. Gavron is a filmmaker to watch.—*David Denby* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE COUNTERFEIT TRAITOR
Without sacrificing bleak romance or spy-vs.-spy tensions, this Second World War espionage film, from 1962, effortlessly captures the mordant tone that most recent undercover epics have rarely achieved; it overflows with the sort of ethical ambiguities associated more often with tales of the Cold War. William Holden plays an American oil trader, now a citizen of neutral Sweden, who must be coerced to pose as a Nazi sympathizer in order to spy on German fuel supplies for the Allies. Only after he experiences the Third Reich's atrocities at first hand does he emerge as a committed agent; he breaks through his cynical world view—that an industrialized society will always be in the sway of ruthless power brokers—to a new realization that evil exists and must be fought. Holden, a master of mixed impulses, delivers a daringly modulated performance that pays off in empathy as well as thrills. And the always sensual, keenly intelligent Lilli Palmer, who plays the prime mover behind his moral redemption, never had a more complex, riveting, or heartbreaking role. Although the writer-director George Seaton alters some facts and emphases from Alexander Klein's nonfiction book of the same title, his firm grasp of the story's issues makes this picture as tough-minded as its source.—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade; July 12.)

THE EXILES
Kent Mackenzie's miraculous independent film, made between 1958 and 1961 with scrounged film, borrowed equipment, donated services, and free labor, has, scandalously, not been released commercially until now. Mackenzie, while a U.S.C. film student, befriended Native Americans who had left their reservations and towns for Los Angeles, and he persuaded them to reënact scenes from their own lives for the camera. The resulting drama, a Pilgrim's Progress of three characters through a night of urban loneliness and dissipation, has an epic grandeur and a monumental intimacy that belies its mere seventy-two minutes. Yvonne, who is pregnant and dreams of a better life for her child, drains away the hours watching B-Westerns in an all-night grind house while her layabout boyfriend, Homer, goes out to drink and gamble. Tommy, a smooth operator, hangs out in bars and tries to pick up women but likens his life to "doing time on the outside." Mackenzie films the minutely incremental action (or, more often, inaction) in strikingly textured and composed images (the night photography alone would make the film immortal), balancing them with the character's revealing, poignant voice-over monologues. Few directors in the history of cinema have so skillfully and deeply joined a sense of place with the subtle flux of inner life.—*Richard Brody* (IFC Center.)

EXPIRED
Cecilia Miniucchi has assembled a talented cast for her dyspeptic love story—masquerading as a comedy—about Claire (Samantha Morton) and Jay (Jason Patric), two lonely Los Angeles parking cops trying, with much difficulty, to forge a relationship. Jay, a very angry man who is secretly addicted to Internet porn, finds himself attracted to the ethereally placid Claire, who lives with her mute, invalid mother (Teri Garr, who still lights up the screen) and spends time with her cheerful neighbor (the buoyant Illeana Douglas). Morton and Patric's performances, while persuasive, suffer from the script's lack of detail: Jay's inexplicably cruel behavior toward Claire isn't backed up with insight into his evidently fraught inner life. Instead, all we get is a slap in the face—or, to put it in the terms of this film, an unjustified summons—from an unfeeling jerk.—*Shauna Lyon* (Angelika Film Center.)

GET SMART
This good-natured but bland reprise of the sixties TV classic offers a few laughs but little delight. As the bumbling top-secret Agent 86, Steve Carell handles his droll dialogue with aplomb, but he's no physical comedian; Anne Hathaway, a radiant romantic actress pressed into duty as his ultra-competent partner, Agent 99, is no comedian at all, though she brings the brief moments of manufactured pathos fully to life. There



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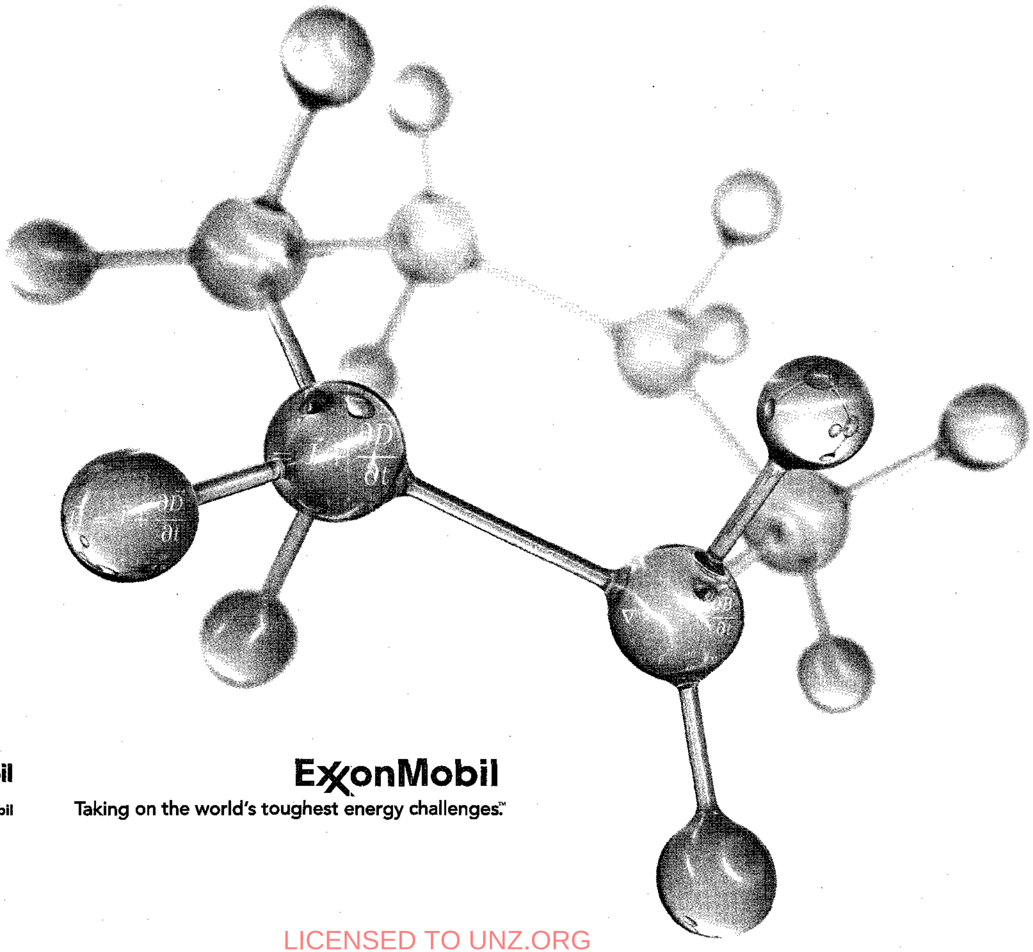

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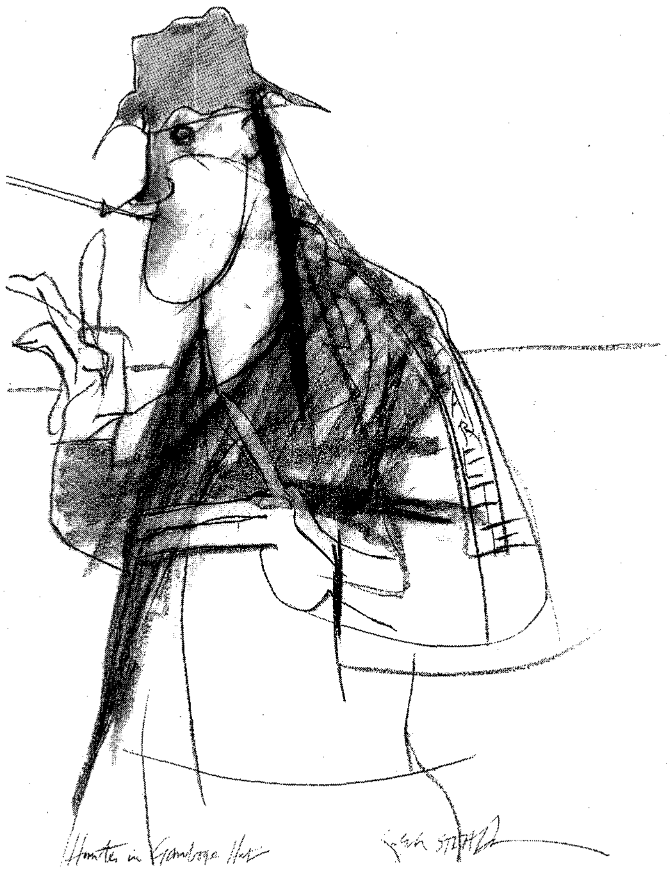
are some well-conceived gags and, as in the series, lots of funny gadgets, but the plot has been ramped up into a noisy and pointless action spectacle, full of generic C.G.I. The best scene is a high-stakes dance-off that is, alas, edited to death, leaving the impression that few of the actors know how to dance. A climactic wink at Hitchcock's "The Man Who Knew Too Much" does this time-filler no favors.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

THE HAPPENING

An invertebrate exercise in fear from M. Night Shyamalan, who seems to have mislaid the disciplined dread that he could summon in the days of "The Sixth Sense." Mark Wahlberg plays a math teacher who, in the company of his wife (Zooey Deschanel) and a few stragglers, flees the nameless, invisible toxic wave that is being swept along the Eastern Seaboard by trees, grass, and all things green. The urgent topicality of this threat is outdone only by its dramatic vagueness; when it finally and limply subsides, it does so without explanation. "The Birds," you could argue, had just such a quiet climax, plus a hint of some mysterious link between the forces of nature and private human dismay, but Hitchcock sustained his ominous mood, whereas Shyamalan—after the tautness of the first twenty minutes, which he handles with aplomb—swiftly loses his grip. Both the script and the performances tip toward the risible: a pity, because through the cracks in the nonsense one can still glimpse the director's abiding (and unmodish) fixation on all things drear and deathly. He could spook us yet.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 6/30/08.) (In wide release.)



"Gonzo," a documentary about Hunter S. Thompson, opens July 4.

RALPH STEADMAN

I AM A CAT

Kon Ichikawa's 1975 adaptation of Soseki's three-volume novel (written in 1905-06) is a subtle, tender depiction of a Proustian circle of artists, scientists, and dreamers jolted alert by the bitter realities of Japanese society. Tatsuya Nakadai stars as an idealistic English teacher who paints and writes while struggling gamely with his burdens as the family breadwinner (he's the father of three small children) and as a political freethinker who abhors the militaristic nationalism that is becoming common coin. He and his friends (including a tall, orotund painter and an awkward young scientist in love with the daughter of a corrupt local tycoon) pay a lot of attention to a neighborhood band of felines—his own, an unnamed gray one, who is in love with the tycoon's pampered house cat, and a hard-nosed black cat who trains himself to hunt large animals. Ichikawa lays out the crisscrossing romantic intrigues—especially the teacher's dangerous pursuit of his niece—with gentle humor but punctuates them with sudden moments of overwhelming emotion. The long setup culminates in a series of grand, serene insights, which also turn the film's title from a dryly comic refrain to a deeply satisfying, cathartic revelation. In Japanese.—*R.B.* (Film Forum; July 2.)

THE INCREDIBLE HULK

The director, Louis Leterrier, doesn't try for poetry the way Ang Lee, the director of "Hulk," did in 2003, but Leterrier is marginally better than Lee at the summer-action-spectacle side of the Hulk story. Edward Norton, replacing Eric Bana, is Bruce Banner, a man who, when provoked, grows into fifteen feet or so of lime-green power with the temperament of a nasty five-year-old boy—he likes to throw things. But the truth is that, in any version, the Hulk is a dull beast. He's just a big angry guy; he has no soul, no oddities, no vulnerable or tender spots. If Bruce, in his normal state, were ambivalent about the powers that lie within him—drawn to the excitement of overwhelming strength but also repelled by it—the tension for the audience might be overwhelming, because this would speak to the way that we, too, are both tempted and repelled by anger. But the movie presents Bruce conventionally, as a man who has a strange, hateful disease that he can't get rid of, and the digital destruction derby that follows Bruce's enlargement is large-scale but familiar. It's a tired movie for a jaded audience. With Liv Tyler and William Hurt.—*D.D.* (6/23/08) (In wide release.)

KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL

As if on cue, a drama for kids about unemployment and foreclosure—though one set during the Depression, based on the popular series of books and dolls. Abigail Breslin stars as a spunky ten-year-old cub journalist living in middle-class comfort in Cincinnati until her father (Chris O'Donnell) loses his job and flees to Chicago to look for work and her mother (Julia Ormond) is forced to take in boarders to save their home. When the Kittredge house is burglarized in a crime wave that the newspapers are blaming on vagrants, the plot becomes a mild mystery that Kit tries to solve for the sake of her young hobo friend, Will (Max Thieriot). The story, though utterly sanitized (racism is wished away, ethnic issues ignored, politics reduced to Roosevelt vs. Scrooge), is moderately engaging, and the period design is appealingly crisp, but, sadly, Breslin can't carry the movie. She's merely cute, her moxie forced; her performance makes one long for the young Lindsay Lohan's smartly focussed energy. The real star is the troubled economy and the mood of menace that the director, Patricia Rozema, conjures from it.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

ROMAN POLANSKI: WANTED AND DESIRED

Many of the facts are familiar: Roman Polanski was arrested in 1977 for having sex with a thirteen-year-old girl. He pled guilty to a criminal offense, and, the next year, while awaiting sentencing, he fled to France, where he remains to this day. Marina Zenovich's documentary, bland as cinema but satisfying as journalism, goes behind the scenes of the case to reveal the legal maneuvering that went into it. Through in-depth interviews with most of the case's protagonists, notably the victim, the lead prosecutor, and Polanski's defense attorney—though not with Polanski or Judge Laurence J. Rittenband, who is deceased—Zenovich explains why Polanski fled: because, despite having negotiated a plea and having been recommended for probation, he was subject to the whims of a highly media-sensitive (and unscrupulous) judge who feared being made to look bad. By documenting Rittenband's caprices and misdeeds, she makes clear that it was a reasonable thing for Polanski to do. Zenovich is particularly good at showing the legal system to be driven by personality and by media politics, but she does Polanski no favors by dwelling on his difficult past (as if pleading for mercy from the viewer) and yet selecting archival clips in which he comes off as almost solipsistically remorseless.—*R.B.* (Angelika Film Center.)

TOO LATE BLUES

John Cassavetes's first Hollywood movie, from 1961, tells the grim, moody story of Ghost Wakefield (Bobby Darin), an L.A. jazz pianist whose quintet is reduced to playing day gigs in schools and parks. His band members are impatient for success, but his devotion to his art prevents him from making commercial compromises. A soft-voiced, emotionally damaged singer, Jessica Polanski (Stella Stevens), takes Ghost's music to a new level, but their fragile romance makes him her protector when he can barely fend for himself. The grinding night world of killer cocktail parties and rough pickup bars, artistic exertions and sleazy exploiters, was Cassavetes's own, and he films it with fury and tenderness. He coaxed impressive performances from the young, unpolished Darin and Stevens: speaking quietly, breathily, desperately, they lay bare the characters' wounded inner lives with a naïve directness. If Ghost's downfall and redemption reek of studio compromise, the film's ravaging outbursts, and the sculptural beauty of its images, are pure, hard, and true.—*R.B.* (MOMA; July 4 and July 6.)

WANTED

After "Night Watch" and "Day Watch," two of the most successful—and certainly the loudest—Russian films ever made, the director Timur Bekmambetov has turned his hungry eyes on the United States. The result is this furious and fantastical piece of junk, which, though nominally set in some town called "Chicago," could take place almost anywhere with roads. The plot entails yet another revenge of the nerd: an accountant (James McAvoy) who follows in the footsteps of his father and becomes a dextrous assassin. He is trained in this delicate art by Sloan (Morgan Freeman), Fox (Angelina Jolie), and a bunch of other killers who have the best interests of the world at heart and, one hopes, their tongues firmly stapled to their cheeks. The outcome should be playful and zippy, and some of the chase sequences, to be fair, are enjoyably shameless in their rush to excess; but the film as a whole feels much nastier than it needs to be, abounding in details of damaged flesh, and it leaves a sour taste.—*A.L.* (6/30/08) (In wide release.)

YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN

Should this comedy ever get to the Middle East, it will roil the falafel tables on both sides of the Arab-Israeli divide. This obscene, ridiculous, and occasionally very funny movie, written by Judd Apatow, Adam Sandler, and Robert Smigel and directed by Dennis Dugan, is about a fabulous Israeli counterterrorism agent (Sandler) who has a bulging crotch and deadly hands (he karate-chops Palestinian machine guns into carrot sticks). Zohan, however, has had enough of "the hate." After an epic contest with his nemesis—an extremist Palestinian warrior known as the Phantom (John Turturro)—Zohan fakes his own death, leaves the tumultuous Promised Land for the slightly less crazy New World, and settles in a mixed Arab and Israeli neighborhood in New York, where he works as a hairdresser in a Palestinian-owned beauty salon. "Zohan" burlesques a host of solemn and blood-stained issues and turns warriors into sex hustlers and would-be American Rotarians. The movie is crude beyond belief; many liquid substances (hummus, etc.) are thrown around; and there are knowing jokes about the way Israelis speak English and make a living in America—jokes that may puzzle anyone west of the Monongahela.—*D.D.* (6/23/08) (In wide release.)

Also Playing

CHRIS AND DON: A LOVE STORY: Quad Cinema. **THE LOVE GURU:** In wide release. **TRUMBO:** In limited release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—Special screenings. July 11 and July 14-17 at 6:45 and 9 and July 12-13 at 4:30, 6:45, and 9: "La France" (2007, Serge Bozon; in French). ♦ "Essential Cinema." July 3 at 7:30: "There Was a Father" (1942, Yasujiro Ozu; in Japanese). ♦ July 3 at 9:30: "The Only Son" (1936, Ozu; in Japanese). ♦ July 5-6 at 5, 7, and 9: "The Rules of the Game" (1939, Jean Renoir; in French). ♦ "Louise Bourgeois on Film." July 9-10 and July 12-18 at 7 and July 11 at 7 and 9:30: "La Rivière Gentille" (2007, Brigitte Cornand). ♦ July 9 at 9:30, July 12 at 9:30, July 13 at 5:30, and July 14 and 16 at 9:15: "Chère Louise: A Portrait of Bourgeois" (1995, Cornand). ♦ July 10 at 9:30, July 12 at 5, July 13 at 9:30, and July 15 and July 17 at 9:15: "The Whisper of the Whistling Water" (2004, Cornand).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—"Afro-Punk Festival." July 4 at 1:30: "A Panther in Africa" (2004, Aaron Matthews). ♦ July 4 at 3:30: "The Federation of Black Cowboys" (2003, Eric Martz). ♦ July 4 at 6: "No Vietnamese Ever Called Me N****r" (1968, David Loeb Weiss). ♦ July 4 at 7:40 and July 7 at 4:30: "Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple" (2006, Stanley Nelson). ♦ July 4 at 9:40 and July 6 at 2: "Soul Britannia" (2007, Don Letts) and "George Clinton: Tales of Dr. Funkenstein" (2006, Letts). ♦ July 5 at 2 and July 9 at 4:30: "Soul to Soul" (1971, Denis Sanders). ♦ July 5 at 4:30: "Ganja & Hess" (1973, Bill Gunn). ♦ July 5 at 6:50: "Passing Through" (1977, Larry Clark). ♦ July 5 at 9:30: "The Upsetter" (2008, Ethan Higbee). ♦ July 6 and 8 at 4:30: "Up Tight!" (1968, Jules Dassin). ♦ July 6 and 8 at 7 and July 7 at 6:50: "White Lies, Black Sheep" (2007, James Spooner). ♦ July 7 at 9:30: "I'm Through with White Girls" (2007, Jennifer Sharp). ♦ July 9 at 6:50: "Afro-Punk" (2003, Spooner) and "Pariah" (2007, Dee Rees). ♦ July 9 at 9:40: "The Landlord" (1970, Hal Ashby).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—The films of Tatsuya Nakadai. All films are in Japanese. July 2 at 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, and 10: "I Am a Cat" (†). ♦ July 3 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "When a Woman Ascends the Stairs" (1960, Mikio Naruse). ♦ July 4 at 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, and 10: "Black River" (1957, Masaki Kobayashi). ♦ July 5 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Samurai Rebellion" (1967, Kobayashi). ♦ July 6 at 1:30, 4:30, and 7:30 and July 7 at 1:30 and 4:30: "Kagemusha" (1980, Akira Kurosawa). ♦ July 7 at 7:30: "Solar Eclipse" (1975, Satsuo Yamamoto). ♦ July 8 at 1:20, 4, 6:40, and 9:20: "Tenchu!" (1969, Hideo Gosha). ♦ July 9 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Untamed" (1957, Naruse). ♦ July 10 at 1:10, 3:15, 5:20, 7:25, and 9:30: "Immortal Love" (1961, Keisuke Kinoshita). ♦ July 11-12 at 1:20, 4:30, and 7:30: "Ran" (1985, Kurosawa). ♦ July 13 at 1:20, 4:30, and 7:45: "Kwaidan" (1964, Kobayashi). ♦ July 14 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Odd Obsession" (1959, Ichikawa).

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE
Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through July 22: "Homage to Yves Montand." July 8 at 12:30, 4, and 7:30: "Jean de Florette" (1986, Claude Berri; in French). ♦ July 15 at 12:30, 4, and 7:30: "Manon of the Spring" (1986, Berri; in French). The 7:30 screening will be introduced by the critic Elliott Stein.

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—In revival. July 3-6 at 11 A.M.: "Wild Strawberries" (1958, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish).

JAPAN SOCIETY
333 E. 47th St. at First Avenue (212-715-1258)—"Japan Cuts: Festival of New Japanese Cinema."

July 10 at 8 and July 12 at 6: "Calendar" (1993, Atom Egoyan; in English, German, Russian, and Armenian). ♦ July 11 at 8:15 and July 12 at 4: "Irma Vep" (1997, Olivier Assayas; in English and French). ♦ July 12 at 8:30 and July 13 at 4: Short films by the Brothers Quay (1984-2003). ♦ July 13 at 6 and July 14 at 5:30: "Aimée & Jaguar" (1989, Max Färberböck; in German). ♦ "Jazz Score." July 2 at 6 and July 5 at 3: "Sleeper" (1973, Woody Allen). ♦ July 2 at 8:30 and July 5 at 6: "Going Places" (1974, Bertrand Blier; in French). ♦ July 3 at 6 and July 12 at 8:30: "The French Connection" (1971, William Friedkin). ♦ July 3 at 8:15 and July 12 at 6: "Taxi Driver" (1976, Martin Scorsese). ♦ July 4 at 6 and July 6 at 2:30: "Shadows" (1959, John Cassavetes) and "Stopforbud" (1963, Jørgen Leth and Ole John). ♦ July 4 at 8:15 and July 6 at 5: "Too Late Blues" (†). ♦ July 5 at 8:30 and July 12 at 2:30: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in English and French). ♦ July 11 at 8:30

TABLES FOR TWO
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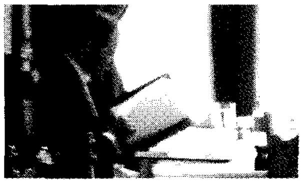

377 Greenwich St. (212-925-3797)—It might seem like piling on to knock Ago, since Frank Bruni, writing in the *Times*, recounted being subjected to "the 'Poseidon Adventure' of wine spills," and Alan Richman offered his compliments, on his *GQ* blog, "to the chef—if there is one—on finding multiple variations on the theme of overcooked." (There is an "executive chef partner," Ago Sciandri, and his Web site features his head shot alongside one of Robert DeNiro, a partner in the venture.) But Ago, one of a chain of Italian *trattorias* that began in Hollywood and metastasized to South Beach, Las Vegas, and now Tribeca, might be the most cynical Californian export since Euro Disney. One is tempted to wonder, amid lurid cocktails and exhibitionist patrons, if the whole thing might not be Angelenos' revenge ploy against the city that gave them Paris Hilton.

Ago offers a Blueberry Martini, which comes garnished with the dry, mottled lemon that seems to have appeared on the lip of every glass of Diet Coke served this decade. It isn't fit for a Smurf. One night at the bar, a couple made out with an athleticism, and a sense of privacy, more often associated with sandy beaches on desert islands. Another time, a party waited to be seated, only to be dumped at a table two feet away from the bar stools on which they'd just killed twenty minutes. (The bill for drinks, of course, could not be transferred.) Besuited captains and black-vested waiters confer and preen and carry on behind a stone counter, while diners occupy, on the other side, a narrow lane of tables. The uneven allotment of space gives the feeling of a trespass, as do the chairs, which are wooden, uncomfortable, and heavy on finials and carved curlicues.

Spa-ishly, there is a lot of seafood on Ago's menu, but none of it—with the exception of *cacciucco toscano*, a tomato-based seafood soup that comes in a cute red crock and nicely plays sugar off of spice—is very good. The cuttlefish skewers are unmemorable, the spaghetti with clams is way too olive oily, and the seafood risotto is gluey and bland. A lamb chop, at thirty-eight dollars, has the heft of a snowflake. Dessert is probably the biggest rip-off: a warm Valrhona *tortino* that a waitress suggests, in almost dictatorial tones, is an arid dud; an apple tart with toasted almonds tastes like it's been soaking in Amaretto. The pizzas are slightly better. If there's one thing Ago does well, it's cheesy. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées $19-$44.)

—*Lauren Collins*

NATALIE MATUTSCHOWSKY

For complete program information, visit www.japansociety.org/japancuts. All films are in Japanese. July 2 and July 7 at 6:30: "The Mourning Forest" (2007, Naomi Kawase). ♦ July 5 at 9: "Sukiyaki Western Django" (2007, Takashi Miike). ♦ July 6 at 4 and July 8 at 7:30: "United Red Army" (2008, Koji Wakamatsu). The July 6 screening will be followed by a Q. & A. with the director by video from Japan. ♦ July 11 at 6:30: "Filmful Life" (2006, Shunji Iwai). ♦ July 11 at 8:30: "The Inugami Family" (1976, Kon Ichikawa). ♦ July 12 at 5:45: "Murder of the Inugami Clan" (2006, Ichikawa).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"Zeitgeist: The Films of Our Time." July 3 at 5:30: "Privilege" (1990, Yvonne Rainer). ♦ July 6 at 3 and July 7 at 5:30: "The Corporation" (2004, Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott). ♦ July 9 at 8 and July 11 at 5:30: "The World" (2004, Jia Zhangke; in Mandarin and Shanxi dialect). ♦ July 10 and 16 at 5:30: "Climates" (2006, Nuri Bilge Ceylan; in Turkish). ♦ and July 13 at 5: "Notes on an African Orestes" (1970, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian). ♦ "Dalí Laughs." July 7 at 6 and July 9 at 8: "The General" (1927, Buster Keaton; silent) and "Salvador Dalí: Home Movie" (1954; silent). ♦ July 7 at 8 and July 10 at 6: "Sherlock, Jr." (1924, Keaton; silent) and "One Week" (1920, Keaton; silent). ♦ July 9 at 6 and July 10 at 8: "The Freshman" (1925, Sam Taylor and Fred Newmeyer) and "Ask Father" (1919; silent). ♦ July 14 at 6 and July 16 at 8: "Safety Last" (1923, Sam Taylor and Fred Newmeyer; silent) and "Luke's Shattered Sleep" (1916, Hal Roach; silent). ♦ July 14 at 8 and July 16 at 6: "The Floorwalker" (1916, Charles Chaplin; silent) and "Shanghaied Lovers" (1924, Roy Del Ruth; silent).

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000, ext. 344)—"Cabaret Cinema." July 4 at 8: "The Great Ziegfeld" (1936, Robert Z. Leonard), introduced by Guy Lesser. ♦ July 11 at 9:30: "Swept Away" (1974, Lina Wertmüller; in Italian), introduced by Wertmüller's biographer Grace Bullaro.

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—"William Holden, a Different Kind of Hero." July 2 at 1:45 and 6:15: "Sunset Boulevard" (1950, Billy Wilder). ♦ July 2 at 4 and 8:30: "Fedora" (1978, Wilder). ♦ July 5 at 1 and 6:20: "The Bridges at Toko-Ri" (1954, Mark Robson). ♦ July 5 at 3:15 and 8:30: "The Bridge on the River Kwai" (1957, David Lean). ♦ July 6 at 1 and 5:30: "The Horse Soldiers" (1959, John Ford). ♦ July 6 at 3:30 and 8: "Escape from Fort Bravo" (1953, John Sturges). ♦ July 7 at 2:30 and 6:30: "Golden Boy" (1939, Rouben Mamoulian). ♦ July 7 at 4:30 and 8:30: "Our Town" (1940, Sam Wood). ♦ July 10 at 1:30 and 6:15: "Breezy" (1973, Clint Eastwood). ♦ July 10 at 3:45 and 8:40: "Network" (1976, Sidney Lumet). ♦ July 11 at 1 and 6:15: "S.O.B." (1981, Blake Edwards). ♦ July 11 at 3:30 and 8:45 and July 15 at 1: "The Wild Bunch" (1969, Sam Peckinpah). ♦ July 12 at 1:30 and 6:50: "The Key" (1958, Carol Reed). ♦ July 12 at 4:10 and 9:30: "The Counterfeit Traitor" (†). ♦ July 13 at 3:30 and 8: "Picnic" (1955, Joshua Logan). ♦ July 14 at 1:30 and 6:15 and July 15 at 3:35: "Sabrina" (1954, Wilder). ♦ July 14 at 3:45 and 8:30: "Stalag 17" (1953, Wilder).

READINGS AND TALKS

"SUNDAYS AT SUNNY'S"
Tim McLoughlin reads from his contribution to the anthology "Brooklyn Noir 3: Nothing But the Truth," and Anya Ulinich offers selections from her novel, "Petropolis." The photographer Shelley Seccombe will discuss and display images from her book, "Lost Waterfront: The Decline and Rebirth of Manhattan's Western Shore." (253 Conover St., Brooklyn. July 6 at 3. For more information, call BookCourt, at 718-875-3677.)

UNION HALL
The comedian Eugene Mirman hosts a book-release party for the anthology "Experimental Philosophy." The book, which is published by Oxford University Press, is edited by Joshua Knobe and Shaun Nichols, two leading figures in the burgeoning field of experimental philosophy, a branch of the discipline that, to the horror (and occasional delight) of its more traditional practitioners, incorporates empirical testing. The editors will be on hand to explain the details. Music will be provided by the singer-songwriter Alina Simone. (702 Union St., Park Slope. 718-638-4400. July 8 at 8.)

"WORD FOR WORD"
David Ebershoff, an editor and the author of "Pasadena: A Novel," moderates a discussion with the first-time novelists Toby Barlow, Charles Bock, Stefan Merrill Block, Ceridwen Dovey, and Sophie Gee. (Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. July 9 at 12:30. For more information, call 212-768-4242.)

"LITERARY UPSTART"
The L Magazine's annual fiction competition, in which writers are critiqued "American Idol"-style during live readings, comes to a climax. The three winners of this season's earlier rounds face off for the grand prize of two hundred and fifty dollars and publication in the magazine. The judges are the *L Magazine* contributing editor Adam Bonislawsi, the Random House editor Ronit Feldman, the literary agent Katherine Fausset, and Ben Greenman, an editor at this magazine. (The Slipper Room, 167 Orchard St., at Stanton St. No tickets necessary. July 11 at 7.)

BOOKCOURT
Darin Strauss reads from his new novel, "More Than It Hurts You," about a young family and Munchausen syndrome by proxy. (163 Court St., Brooklyn. No tickets necessary. July 11 at 7.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"SUNSET HIDDEN HARBOR TOURS"
With the opening of an Ikea store in Red Hook, Brooklyn, dominating the news about the waterfront, it's easy to get the impression that all the harbor's traditional industry has gone the way of the steamboat. That's not actually the case, though, and according to Captain John Doswell, the executive director of the nonprofit advocacy group the Working Harbor Committee, "New York Harbor is the largest shipping port on the East Coast of the U.S.A.—and the third-largest in the country." The committee has organized tours of the waterfront aboard the Zypher, a comfortable sightseeing vessel, that give up-close looks at "tugboat yards, the giant container-ship ports, maritime facilities, floating drydocks, barges and ships, oil docks, and more," Doswell says. "We go places the tourist boats don't go." (July 8 at 6 and select Tuesdays through Sept. 30. For more information, visit www.workingharbor.com.)

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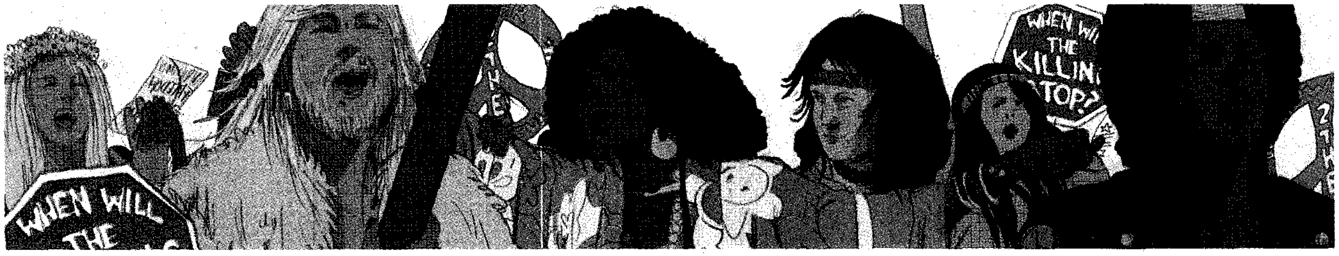
Visit the Goings On blog, at www.newyorker.com/go/goingson, for additional cultural coverage and commentary.


WHEN WILL THE
WHEN WI THE KILLIN STOP?

RACHEL DOMM

ON THE HORIZON

THE THEATRE
LET THE SUN SHINE IN
July 22–Aug. 31

Last year's concert of "Hair: The American Tribal Love Rock Musical," at the Delacorte Theatre, was so successful the Public Theatre decided to give it a full-fledged production. Jonathan Groff stars, at Shakespeare in the Park. (www.publictheater.org.)

ART
RELIABLE SOURCE
July 24–Sept. 1

In an unreliable world, it's comforting to know that some things—such as the Neue Galerie's mission to exhibit early-twentieth century German and Austrian art—remain the same. The exhibition "Highlights from the Permanent Collection" will include stellar works by Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, and Oskar Kokoschka, among others. (212-628-6200.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
LONG LIVE THE KING
July 25–Aug. 3

Karol Szymanowski's richly sensual opera "King Roger," a masterwork from 1926, is rarely staged outside Poland. Leon Botstein conducts an enticing production (which also features the composer's dance oratorio "Harnasie") by the director and designer Lech Majewski as part of his Bard Summerscape series. (845-758-7900.)

NIGHT LIFE
TAPPED IN
July 29–30

The energetic indie-pop group Tilly and the Wall uses a tap dancer instead of a drummer to keep the beat. The Omaha quintet brings its snappy sixties sound to the Music Hall of Williamsburg and the Bowery Ballroom. (212-260-4700.)

MOVIES
NORTHERN LIGHTS
Aug. 7–10

The Belgian brothers Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, who started as documentary filmmakers, imbue their narrative features with physical and political reality; they won Cannes's Best Screenplay Award for their latest work, "Lorna's Silence." Anthology Film Archives will show their four previous features, including "Rosetta" and "The Child." (212-505-5181.)

"Hair," which concludes this year's Shakespeare in the Park series.

Who knew all those double lattes
would end up being so relaxing?

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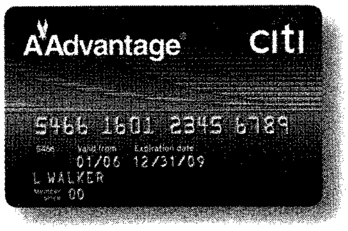

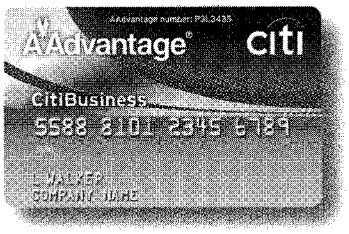

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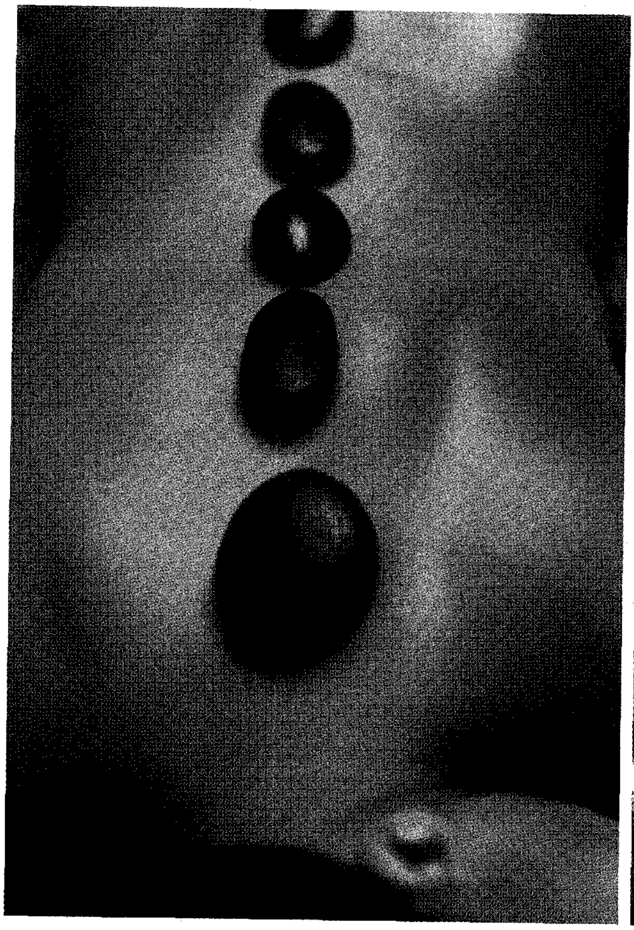

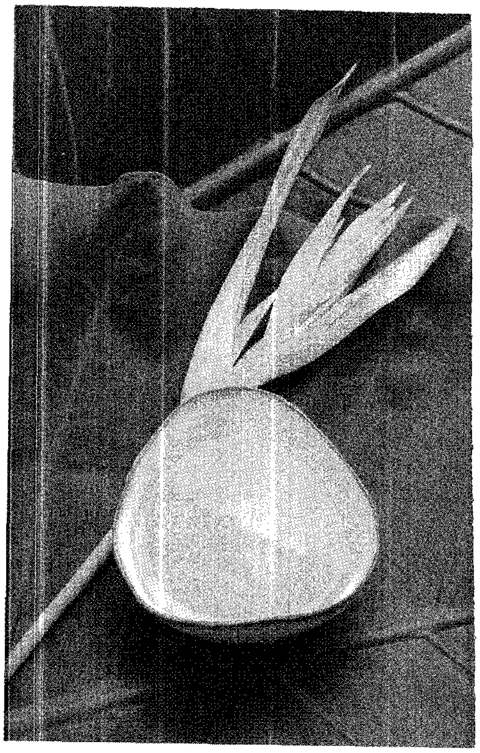

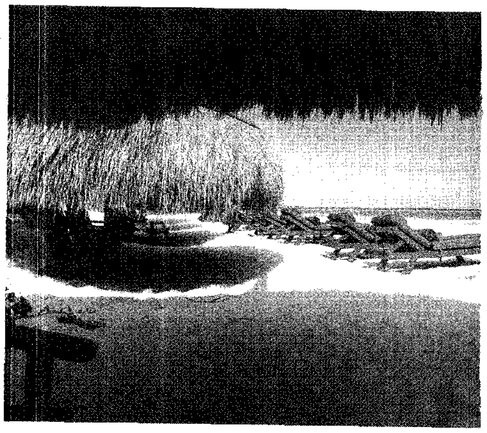

Healing Spas with a Touch of the Gods

Travelers have long flocked to Mexico for rest and relaxation—the sun, the beach, and the ocean being key ingredients for a stress-free vacation. To guarantee that result, schedule a visit to one of the country's world-class spas, which combine the healing practices of Asian and European cultures with treatments unique to Mexico.

One of these signature services is a Mexican *temazcal*, the Nahuatlan name for a stone or mud structure that is shaped like an igloo and used for a purifying sweat bath ritual. The Aztecs relied on these fragrant, steamy retreats for medicinal purposes, and even today sweating is considered beneficial for stimulating circulation and eliminating toxins.

Inside the temazcal, stones are heated to a high temperature and sometimes covered with herbs. A trained healer, called the *temazcalera*, oversees the treatment—regulating the heat by opening a vent, circulating the air with a fan made of eucalyptus or other branches, and dousing the stones with herbal water to create steam.

Guests enter and exit the temazcal through a low door, symbolizing entering and leaving the womb, and are wrapped in blankets for a period of relaxation after the sweat bath ends.

Some of the spas that carry on this tradition are the spa at the **Mandarin Oriental Riviera Maya**, which opened this year just north of Playa del Carmen, the Armonia Spa at the **Pueblo Bonito Pacifica** resort in Cabo San Lucas, and the Kinan Spa at the

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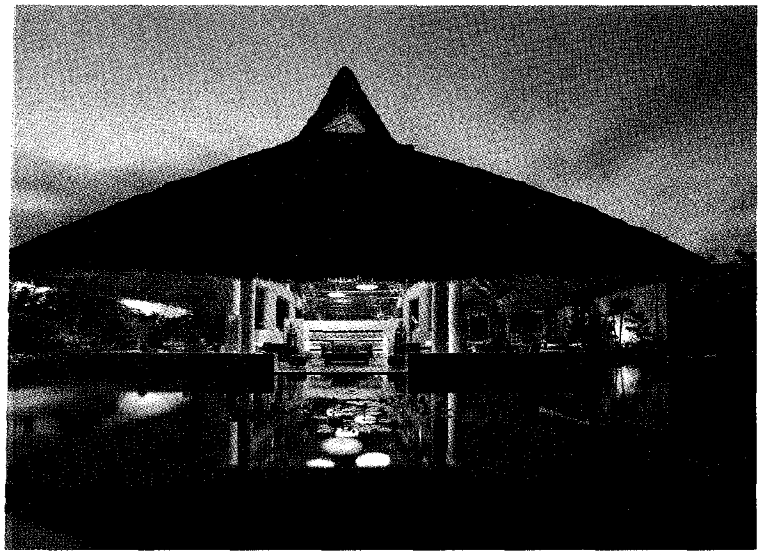
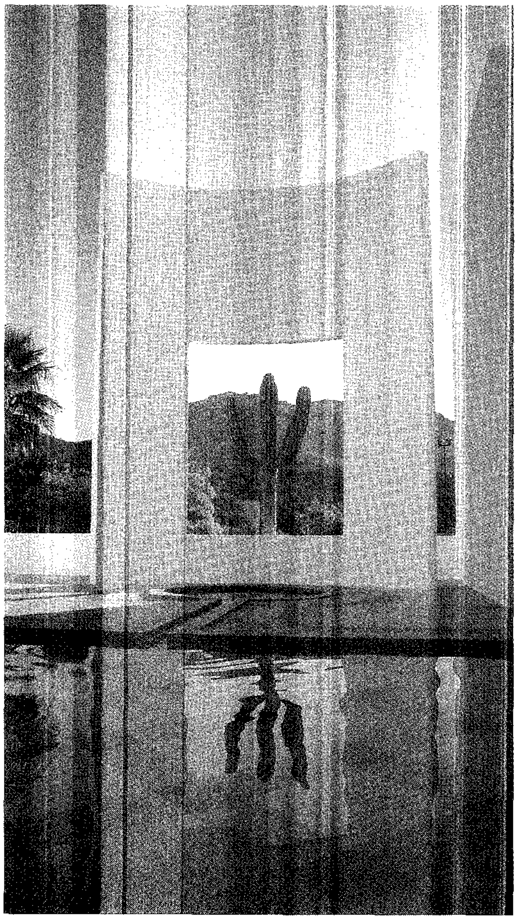
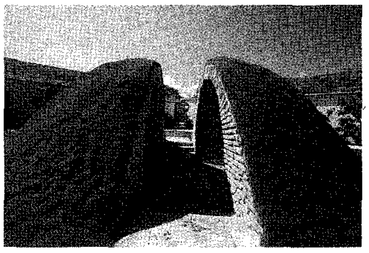






Maroma Resort and Spa south of Cancún—also known for its rooftop yoga *palapa.*

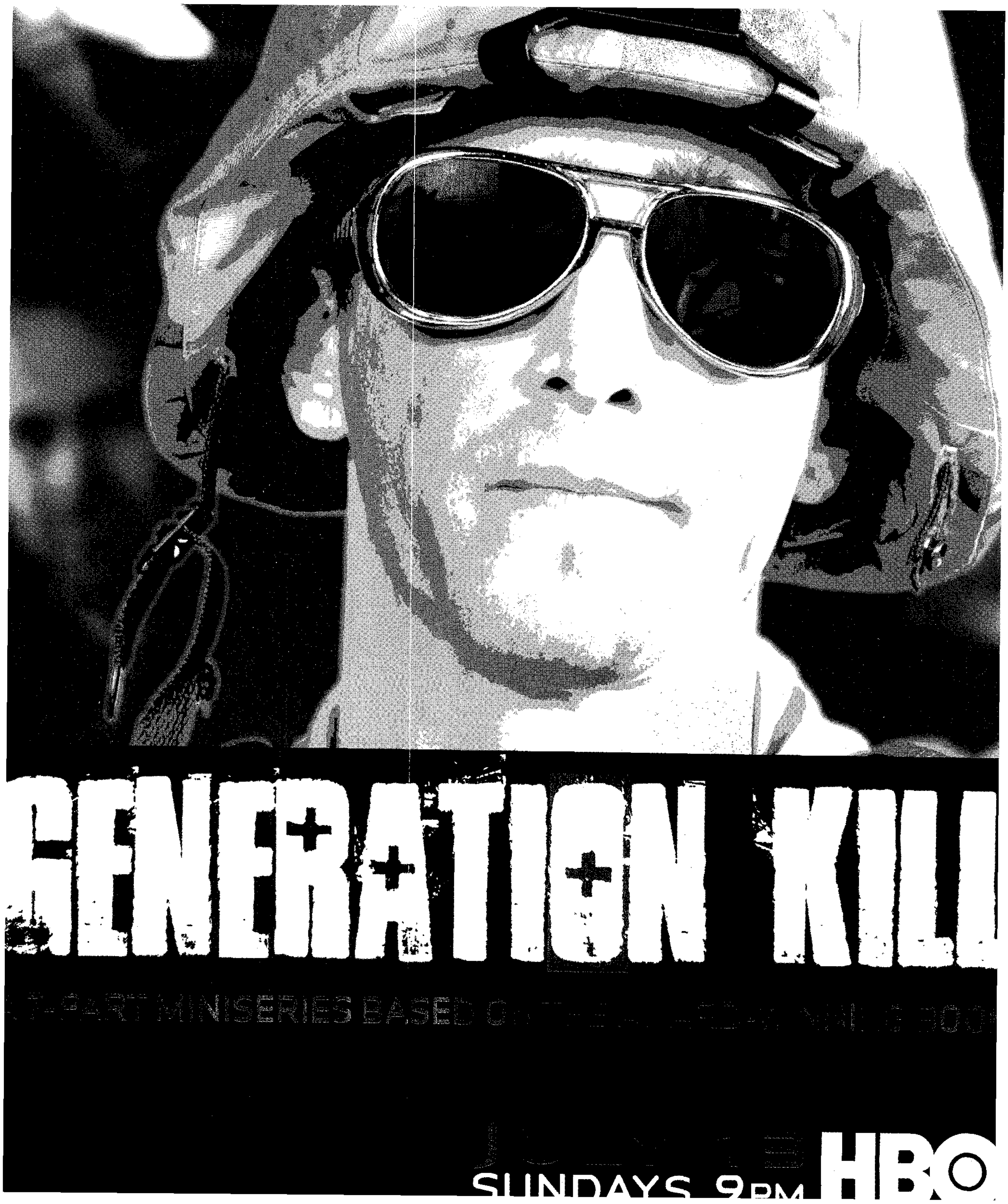
Another treatment indigenous to Mexico is the *cha chac* rain ritual featured at the Willow Stream Spa at the **Fairmont Mayakoba** in the Riviera Maya region. Based on a Mayan tradition, this treatment is named after Chac, the Mayan rain god, and the word "*cha,*" which means "letting go." A cornmeal, clay, and oat mask is applied, then exfoliated and rinsed with a warm rainwater shower, followed by a sage-oil massage.

The Ixchel Spa at the **Hilton Los Cabos Beach & Golf Resort** and the Apuane Spa at the **Four Seasons Resort** in Punta Mita both offer another Mayan-inspired treatment called a *temaztac* body wrap. Although the ingredients used for this treatment vary slightly depending on the spa, it typically involves a lotion made from milk, honey, and orange and vanilla extracts. This elixir is said to soften and hydrate the skin—perfect after a day in the sun.

Mexico is also home to one of the first destination spas: **Rancho La Puerta**, which opened in Tecate on the Baja Peninsula in 1940. This three-thousand-acre property is nestled in a valley an hour's drive from San Diego, and is known for its spectacular setting, weeklong wellness program, and locally grown organic cuisine.

No matter where you find yourself in Mexico, the country's growing ranks of luxurious spas guarantee a relaxing, restorative complement to Mexico's well-known natural wonders.

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE LEFT TO RIGHT: COURTESY OF *MANDARIN ORIENTAL RIVIERA MAYA*; YOGA AT RANCHO LA PUERTA SPA ©NIK WHEELER/CORBIS; PUEBLO BONITO PACIFICA ©WILLIAM HALLGREN; TEMAZCAL IMAGE COURTESY OF MANDARIN ORIENTAL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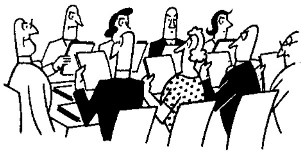
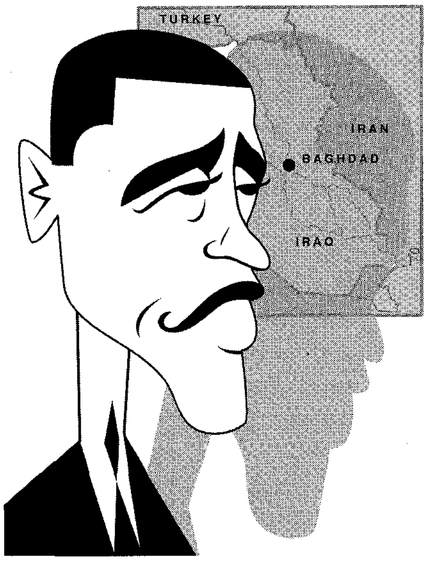
COMMENT
OBAMA'S IRAQ PROBLEM



In February, 2007, when Barack Obama declared that he was running for President, violence in Iraq had reached apocalyptic levels, and he based his candidacy, in part, on a bold promise to begin a rapid withdrawal of American forces upon taking office. At the time, this pledge represented conventional thinking among Democrats and was guaranteed to play well with primary voters. But in the year and a half since then two improbable, though not unforeseeable, events have occurred: Obama has won the Democratic nomination, and Iraq, despite myriad crises, has begun to stabilize. With the general election four months away, Obama's rhetoric on the topic now seems outdated and out of touch, and the nominee-apparent may have a political problem concerning the very issue that did so much to bring him this far.

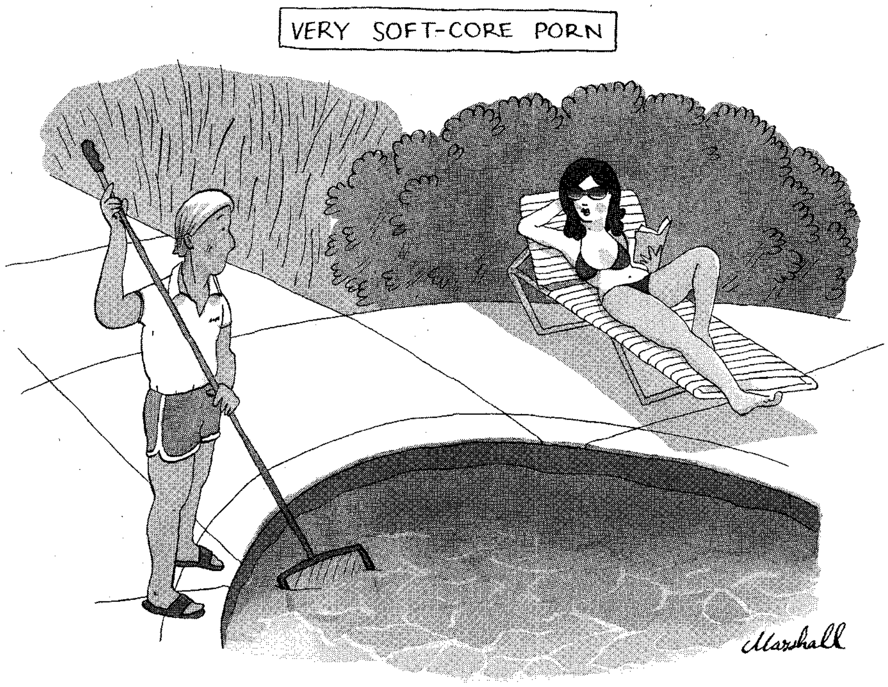
Obama's plan, which was formally laid out last September, called for the remaining combat brigades to be pulled out at a brisk pace of about one per month, along with a strategic shift of resources and attention away from Iraq and toward Afghanistan. At that rate, all combat troops would be withdrawn in sixteen months. In hindsight, it was a mistake—an understandable one, given the nature of the media and of Presidential politics today—for Obama to offer such a specific timetable. In matters of foreign policy, flexibility is a President's primary defense against surprise. At the start of 2007, no one in Baghdad would have predicted that blood-soaked neighborhoods would begin returning to life within a year. The improved conditions can be attributed, in increasing order of importance, to President Bush's surge, the change in military strategy under General David Petraeus, the turning of Sunni tribes against Al Qaeda, the Sadr militia's unilateral ceasefire, and the great historical luck that brought them all together at the same moment. With the level of violence down, the Iraqi government and Army have begun to show signs of functioning in less sectarian ways. These developments may be temporary or cyclical; predicting the future in Iraq has been a losing game. Indeed, it was President Bush's folly to ignore for years the shifting realities on the ground.



Obama, whatever the idealistic yearnings of his admirers, has turned out to be a cold-eyed, shrewd politician. The same pragmatism that prompted him last month to forgo public financing of his campaign will surely lead him, if he becomes President, to recalibrate his stance on Iraq. He doubtless realizes that his original plan, if implemented now, could revive the badly wounded Al Qaeda in Iraq, reënergize the Sunni insurgency, embolden Moqtada al-Sadr to recoup his militia's recent losses to the Iraqi Army, and return the central government to a state of collapse. The question is whether Obama will publicly change course before November. So far, he has offered nothing more concrete than this: "We must be as careful getting out of Iraq as we were careless getting in."

Obama's advisers have been more forthcoming. Samantha Power, before she resigned from the campaign for making an indiscreet remark about Hillary Clinton, told the BBC, "He will, of course, not rely upon some plan that he's crafted as a Presidential candidate or a U.S. senator. He will rely upon a plan—an operational plan—that he pulls together in consultation with people who are on the ground." Last month, the Center for a New American Security, which has become something like Obama's foreign-policy think tank, released a report that argued against a timetable for withdrawal, regardless of the state of the war, and in favor of "conditional engagement," declaring, "Under this strategy, the United States would not withdraw its

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT RISKO



"Can you check the filter? I think it's clogged with dog hair."

• •

forces based on a firm unilateral schedule. Rather, the time horizon for redeployment would be negotiated with the Iraqi government and nested within a more assertive approach to regional diplomacy. The United States would make it clear that Iraq and America share a common interest in achieving sustainable stability in Iraq, and that the United States is willing to help support the Iraqi government and build its security and governance capacity over the long term, but only so long as Iraqis continue to make meaningful political progress." It's impossible to know if this persuasive document mirrors Obama's current thinking, but here's a clue: it was co-written by one of his Iraq advisers, Colin Kahl.

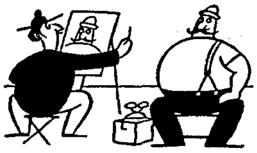
A "conditional engagement" policy is a much better fit for the present situation in Iraq. It would keep the heat on Iraqi politicians, whose willingness to reach compromise on issues like oil revenues, provincial elections, de-Baathification, and power sharing still lags well behind the government's recent military successes. It would allow for a phased withdrawal of most troops, depending on political progress and on the performance of the Iraqi Army. This, in turn, would ease the pressure on the American military and answer the rightful disenchantment in American public opinion. There will be no such thing as victory in Iraq, but the next President, if he remains nimble, may be able to keep the damage under control.

The politics of the issue is tricky, because acknowledging changed ideas in response to changed facts is considered a failing by the political class. Accordingly, Obama, on the night that he proclaimed himself the nominee, in St. Paul, made a familiar declaration: "Start leaving we must. It's time for Iraqis to take responsibility for their future." His supporters claim that the polls are with Obama, that war fatigue will make Iraq a political winner for him in November. Yet, as exhausted as the public is with the war, a candidate who seems heedless of progress in Iraq will be vulnerable to the charge of defeatism, which John McCain's campaign will connect to its broader theme of Obama's inexperience in and weakness on national security. The relative success of the surge is one of the few issues going McCain's way; we'll be hearing about it more and more between now and November, and it might sway some centrist voters who have doubts about Obama.

Obama has shown, with his speech on race, that he has a talent for candor. One can imagine him speaking more honestly on Iraq. If pressed on his timetable for withdrawal, he could say, "That was always a goal, not a blueprint. When circumstances change, I don't close my eyes—I adapt." He could detail in his speeches the functions that American troops and diplomats can continue to perform even as our primary combat role recedes: training and advising, counterterrorism, brokering deals among Iraqi factions, checking their expansionist impulses, opening talks with our enemies in the region. He could promise to negotiate all this with Iraqi leaders, emphasizing the difference between a relationship that respects the wishes of the public in both countries and one in which Iraqis are coerced into coöperation. If Obama truly wants to be seen as a figure of change, he needs to talk less about the past and more about the future: not the war that should never have been fought but the war that he, alone of the two candidates, can find an honorable way to end.

—*George Packer*

THOUSAND WORDS DEPT.
BY A NOSE



When Janet Hamlin first went to Guantánamo Bay to work as a courtroom sketch artist, in April of 2006, she was forbidden to draw the faces of detainees in any detail, as part of the Pentagon's efforts to comply with the Geneva Conventions. By the time of her second trip, a year later, the Pentagon had decided to allow detailed drawings of those detainees who had been formally charged with war crimes. Soon, Hamlin found herself seated directly behind the Australian terrorist suspect David Hicks, who had grown an enormous, view-obstructing mop of hair. "He looked like a caveman," Hamlin said the other day, while sitting in her home studio, in Nyack. "I said, 'I have to draw his face. I can't just draw the back of his head and show Cousin Itt. Can I move?' "

Guantánamo visit No. 5 took place in early June, when the prison's most famous inmate, the alleged terrorist mastermind Khalid Sheikh Moham-

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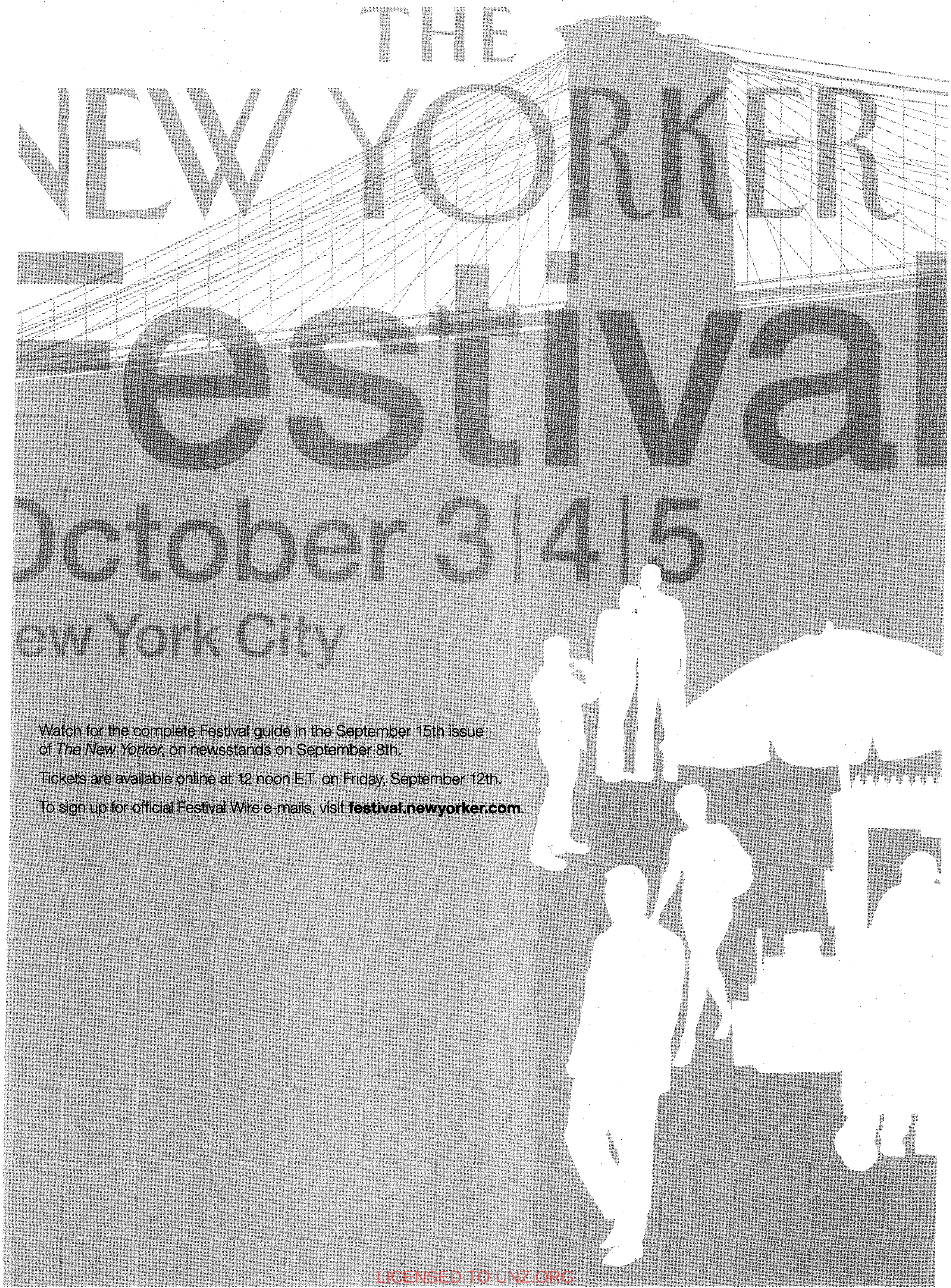
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Festival
October 3|4|5
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Tickets are available online at 12 noon E.T. on Friday, September 12th.

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med—K.S.M. to the staff—was due in court. After a harrowing flight aboard a C-130 Hercules ("It looks like something you would see in an old John Wayne movie—it's like a flying garage"), Hamlin was escorted to a viewing room, separated from the court by glass. No binoculars or other visual aids were allowed, and audio was piped in on a twenty-second delay. "So it was like watching a bad Japanese movie," she said. "Imagine yourself in a room behind the court, and K.S.M. was probably a few trees back," she continued, looking out the window toward her back yard, where her dog, Molly, was yelping to be let in. "He had these big goggles on, with an elastic safety strap, and he would do this occasionally"—she craned her neck and raised her hand to an imaginary set of goggles—"and then look at me, as if posing." Hamlin was surprised at K.S.M.'s vanity, given his famously unkempt appearance upon his apprehension, in 2003, but in captivity he had acquired a dignified look: much leaner, and with a Merlinesque gray beard. Hamlin did her best to sketch a decent likeness, but the goggles and the beard may have blinded her to the subtleties of his facial features. She gave him "quite the beak," she admitted.

K.S.M. was not pleased. During a break in the proceedings, Hamlin saw Mohammed gesturing in disapproval as he examined her work. "They said, 'Um, listen, K.S.M. doesn't want to O.K. this,' " she recalled. "He says, 'The nose is wrong, and tell the artist to go get my F.B.I. picture off the Internet and use that as a reference to fix it.' " So began an hour-long process in which Hamlin was escorted to the media tent, where she printed out an image before returning—"always the gate, the search, the wand"—to make reparations. The picture was almost certainly not the F.B.I. photograph that K.S.M. had in mind. "It's that one where he's in a T-shirt, looking really dishevelled," she said. Still, Mohammed had a point. Whatever the other indignities of the photo, which made him look like an especially hirsute D.W.I. offender, it showed a relatively short and slender nose compared with the proboscis that Hamlin had given him. She softened the edges before resubmitting it.

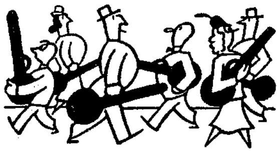
The next day, Hamlin flew to Andrews Air Force Base, in Maryland, and hitched a ride to New York with an Italian television journalist, who "had a swanky car that I kind of stretched out in," arriving at home just in time for her eight-year-old daughter's birthday. "I slept for three hours, and the next thing I know there were six girls here and I was grilling hot dogs, making mac and cheese, baking cupcakes," she said. Hamlin's daughter does not know who K.S.M. is, but she liked the stuffed iguana that her mother brought back from Cuba.

"It's the hardest job I've ever done," Hamlin said of Guantánamo. There were a couple of baseball caps on the shelf behind her, featuring an embroidered message on the back: "It don't GTMO better than this." She said that she has grown to appreciate some of the smaller "heartwarming touches," such as the soldiers' placing an orchid in the women's lavatory, but that she could do without the knowledge that the bottled water she'd been drinking was chilled in an oversized refrigerator nicknamed "the morgue." She said, "It's a little macabre."

—Ben McGrath

BACK PAGES DEPT.

THE CHILL



If you had stumbled into Banjo Jim's, in the East Village, on a recent Wednesday night and encountered a sixty-something guy leading a band through a fervent rendition of "Wild Thing," for an audience of two dozen or so, you might have concluded, "This is lame," and slipped back out the door. But it wasn't lame, because the sixty-something guy was Chip Taylor, who wrote "Wild Thing," among many other hit songs, both country and rock—"Angel of the Morning," "Try (Just a Little Bit Harder)"—and who has, at various times, rounded out the royalties with his earnings as a professional gambler, and who also happens to be the brother of the actor Jon Voight, which makes him an uncle to Angelina Jolie. So here was a man who can perform "Wild Thing" whenever and however he likes.

Taylor's biography is an odd one, even in the misfit pantheon of great country songwriters. First off, he's from Yonkers. His father, Elmer Voight, was the head pro at a golf club in Scarsdale, who liked to tell his three sons (the third brother, Barry, is a prominent volcanologist) that he was an undercover agent for the F.B.I. As a boy, Taylor and some friends started a country band, and when he was sixteen he was signed by King Records. A few years later, he got a job writing country songs for the publishing arm of Columbia Records. Chet Atkins, the guitar player and head A. & R. man at RCA Records in Nashville, took a shine to a song he'd written and, not quite believing that its composer could be from New York, asked to see everything he wrote. This enabled Taylor to give up a nascent gig as a professional golfer (hence the stage name Chip—he'd holed out from off the green several Sundays in a row) and settle into a career as a Brill Building songwriter, turning out hits for Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Jackie DeShannon, Evie Sands, and Emmylou Harris, among many others.

Each day, he'd ride the train down from Yonkers to compose in a cubicle on the second floor of 1650 Broadway. At quitting time, he'd go to the printer's to pick up the next day's racing form, commute home (wife, children, house—the full catastrophe), study the form, pick two or three horses, and call them in the next morning. It was a fine living. His winning percentage was very high, and most bookies—except, he says, Meyer Lansky, who piggybacked on Taylor's picks—stopped taking his bets. In 1981, Taylor quit the music business to focus on the gambling, partnering with the legendary horse handicapper Ernie Dahlman. They worked together out of an OTB in Hauppauge, on Long Island. Taylor also learned to count cards and win at blackjack; eventually the Atlantic City casinos banned him. He took up songwriting and recording again twelve years ago, and these days he writes music and plays the horses, sometimes simultaneously, in his apartment, on East Fifty-fourth Street.

Taylor was at Banjo Jim's to celebrate the release of his latest album, "New Songs of Freedom." Among the guests was his ex-ex-wife, Joanie, whom

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NEW MONEY OLD MONEY
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VEGETARIANS
DOG
CAT
LOVERS
ACTORS
MOVIE CRITICS
SPEEDERS
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ELEVATOR RIDERS
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WIND FARMERS
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GOTHS
SOCIALISTS
SOCIALITES
SINGLE
MARRIED
THINKERS
DOERS
PROCRASTINATORS
GO-GETTERS

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he remarried two months ago, in Las Vegas. Earlier, he played a song that he wrote for her in 1956, "Little Joan," and she stood by the bar, beaming. She had come into the city from Westchester with a couple of girlfriends, and was hurrying home after the show. Married or not, she and Taylor don't live together. "It works," she said. "He goes out to dinner at ten. I go to bed at eight. My son-in-law said, 'I hope this marriage doesn't ruin your wonderful divorce.'"

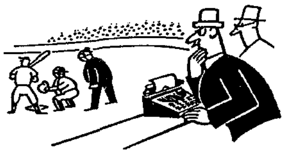
Taylor looks a lot like his brother Jon, minus the menace. He has longish gray hair, a sly grin, and the hunched shoulders of a man who has spent many hours leaning over a guitar. "A lot of my life has been guided by what I call the chill factor," he said later. "I'll give you an example. I was a little kid, maybe eight years old, and my parents had tickets to a play called 'My Wild Irish Rose.' They had an extra ticket, and they didn't have a babysitter for me. I fought them the whole way. But I'm sitting in the theatre, the music comes on, and my body was, like, on fire. At the end of the play, I didn't want to talk to my parents. I just wanted to hold on to that wonderful feeling.

Chip Taylor

"Next time the same chill happened was when I heard country music for the first time, over the radio, from a station in Wheeling, West Virginia. It was the sad stuff that did it, the cryin'. Tingling all over me. And it would be the same feeling more or less that I would get when I'd write my songs. . . . If it's not a 'funny' song, if it's a passionate song, I identify whether I want to continue writing it by the chill." He added, "Not all my songs fit into this. I was trying to make a living in this business. I wrote a lot more songs than the chill factor dictated." The horses don't really give him the chill, either, but he loves them anyway.

—*Nick Paumgarten*

ANNALS OF NAUGHT
NOTHING DOING



With the Yankees' pitching in a perpetual flummox and the distraction of a home All-Star Game looming into view in the last summer of baseball up at the Stadium, this is a good time to bring up a vivid, semi-obscure Yankee team record that almost rivals those fabled thirty-nine pennants and twenty-six World Championships. Telling it only takes a minute. On Sunday, August 2, 1931, the Yanks were shut out on the road by the Red Sox, 1–0, in a game played, mysteriously, at Braves Field, the home of Boston's National League club in those days. The Yanks were not shut out again, away or at home, until August 3, 1933, a span of three hundred and eight games, or, as measured back then, exactly two seasons. Zeroes are baseball's most insistent number, but no other major-league team has come anywhere close to this astounding skein. The parallel record in the National League, for instance, is the Cincinnati Reds' two hundred and eight games not-shut-out, between April 3, 2000, and May 23, 2001. Last year's Yankees were shut down eight times, while last year's Twins were goose-egged fourteen times.

The statistically minded might suppose that the endless connivings of chance played a role in the Yankees' great run, but any eleven-year-old interested enough to punch up the 1931-33 Yanks on his bedroom iMac would know better the moment he saw that their starting lineup in those days included six regulars subsequently voted into the Hall of Fame: catcher Bill Dickey, first baseman Lou Gehrig, shortstop Tony Lazzeri, third baseman Joe Sewell, and outfielders Earle Combs and Babe Ruth (who was nearing the end of his career). There were also three future Hall of Fame pitchers on the Yankee roster—Herb Pennock, Red Ruffing, and Lefty Gomez—although, with one exception, the Yankee pitchers didn't play much of a part in avoiding shutouts. The exception is Ruffing, who, on August 13, 1932, blanked the Washington Senators over a scoreless nine innings—scoreless for both teams—in their home park, Griffith Stadium.

Allowed to bat again in the tenth (he was good enough at the plate to be called on regularly as a pinch-hitter), Ruffing hit a solo home run, and then closed out the Senators in the bottom half, to preserve the win and the string. Ruffing, the Yankees' ace, had slitted eyes and high cheekbones, and held further interest for every New York boy fan of that time because he'd lost four toes on his left foot in a mining accident, back home in Illinois, at the age of fifteen. Now he had accounted for both scores in the same game. No other pitcher has matched this extra-innings deed in the ensuing seventy-six—well, almost—years.

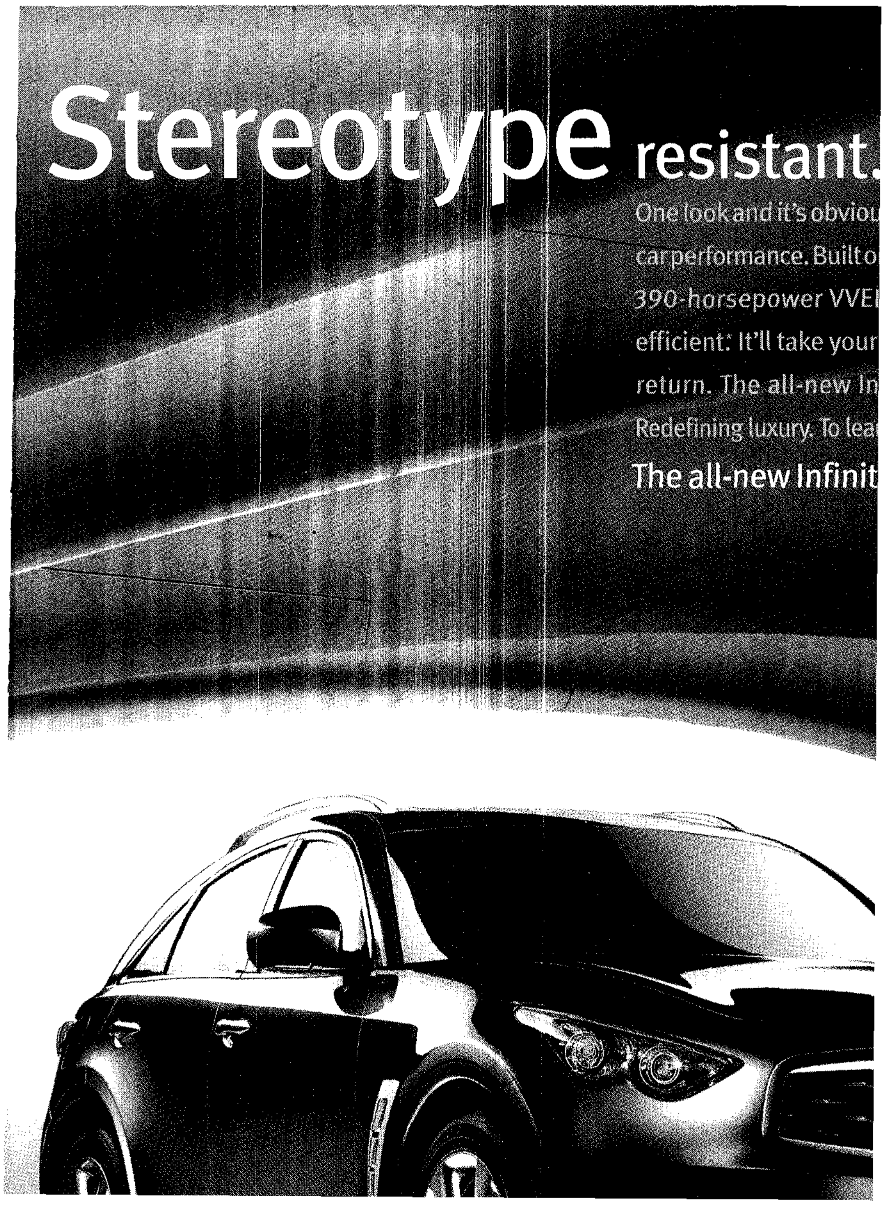
But how come the Yankees played at Braves Field on the day of their last previous zero? For the answer, we called up Seymour Siwoff, the founder and proprietor and chief enthusiast of the Elias Sports Bureau, the Fort Knox of sports statistics, and put the question.

"Back in a minute," he said, and 2.316 minutes later he was back. "Sunday blue laws!" he cried. "Oh, I love this place—we have everything! You couldn't play ball on Sunday at Fenway because there was a church within a thousand feet of the park. Maybe more than one. So they'd go over and play at Braves Field instead. The Monday game, back at Fenway, was the beginning of the Yankee streak. Listen, do you know who ended it—who shut them out finally? Should I look that up?"

"It was Lefty Grove," we said, naming the Philadelphia Athletics grandee, the primo starter of his era.

"Grove, of *course!*" said Siwoff. "I had an inkling. I almost knew."

—*Roger Angell*



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THE FINANCIAL PAGE

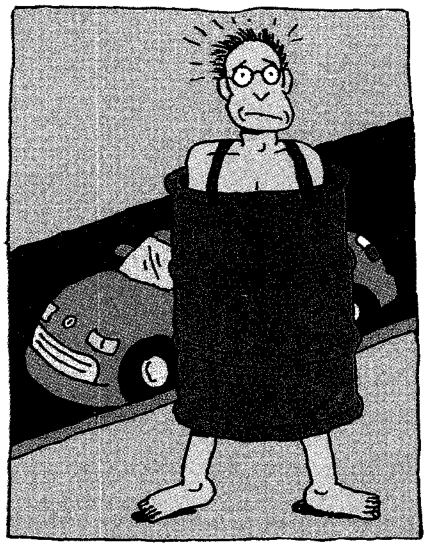
OILY SPECULATIONS

When bad things happen, it's always nice to have a scapegoat. So, with Americans furious about soaring oil prices, Congress has gone in search of someone to blame. There are a number of usual suspects to choose from, depending on your politics—OPEC, greedy oil companies, lily-livered environmentalists opposed to oil drilling—but now Congress has seized on another set of villains: commodity speculators. "Excessive market speculation," in the words of Senator Joseph Lieberman, has supposedly inflated the price of oil and other commodities beyond reason. Curb speculation, as a raft of proposed laws intend to do, and oil prices will soon return to earth.

Speculation has been a favorite target of politicians looking to mollify anxious voters since the time of ancient Greece, when the orator Lysias protested that wheat traders had reduced Athens to a "state of siege." Even in market-friendly America, there is a long tradition of denouncing speculators as dishonest, unproductive parasites; the nineteenth-century preacher Henry Ward Beecher decried their "cool, calculating, essential *spirit* of concentrated avaricious selfishness." And not unreasonably: the past century is full of examples of avaricious selfishness leading to the manipulation and corruption of markets. In the twenties, speculators banded together in "stock pools," trading a particular stock among themselves to create the illusion that its value was rising—in March, 1929, a stock pool succeeded in pushing up RCA's stock price by almost fifty per cent in less than two weeks—and then dumping the stock when outside investors bought in. In the late seventies, a speculators' pool led by the Hunt brothers mounted an attempt to corner the world's silver market, and at one point controlled an amount equivalent to an entire year's global production.

Given this history, and the fact that recent years have seen a huge flood of speculative money entering the commodity markets—assets in commodity indexes, by some calculations, increased twentyfold between 2003 and the spring of this year—it's not unreasonable to wonder if there might be something nefarious behind the sharp run-up in oil prices. But there's little convincing evidence that the oil market is being significantly manipulated. Whatever chicanery is occurring—and we can assume there is some—has only a marginal effect on prices at the pump.

Congress is not, though, just attacking illegal market manipulation; it's also taking aim at perfectly legal speculation, namely the buying and selling of futures contracts, which are effectively bets that oil prices will go up (or down). Futures contracts can be used by oil sellers (like OPEC) or oil buyers (like the airlines) to hedge their risks by agreeing to sell or buy oil in the future at a set price. Speculators, by contrast, mostly use futures contracts to gamble on oil prices, and have no interest in buying or selling real barrels of oil. These gambles can be tremendously lucrative, but they don't directly determine the real (or "spot") price of oil. That's set by the people who are buying and selling actual barrels of petroleum. Although speculators could directly distort oil prices by turning their futures contracts into oil and then taking it off the market to drive up prices, a look at oil inventories shows no sign that this is happening.



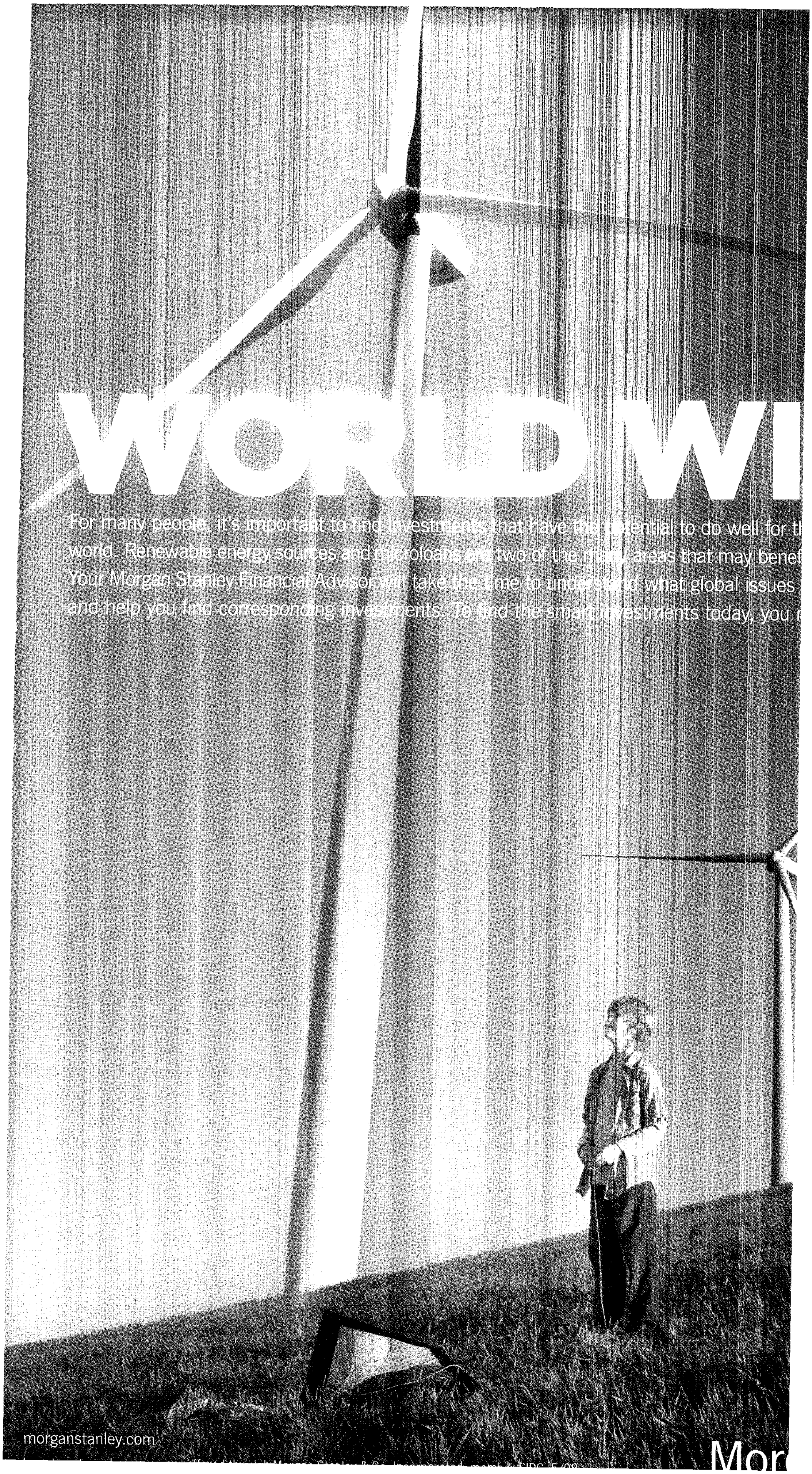
SEYMOUR CHWAST

If speculators aren't at fault, why have oil prices spiked so high? Fundamental reasons aren't hard to find. Between 2000 and 2007, world demand for petroleum rose by nearly nine million barrels a day, but OPEC has been consistently unable, or unwilling, to significantly increase supply, and production by non-OPEC members has risen by just four million barrels a day. The prospect of military action against Iran, which would disrupt global supply, seems greater than it did a few years ago. And the plunging value of the dollar has meant that the cost of oil has jumped more in the U.S. in the past year than it has in countries with healthier currencies.

But there's also something else at work, which the oil guru Daniel Yergin calls a "shortage psychology." The price of oil—more than that of many other commodities—isn't based solely on current supply and demand. It's also based on people's expectations about future supply and demand, because those expectations determine whether it makes sense for oil producers to sell their oil now or leave it in the ground and sell it later. Currently, the market is assuming that oil will become scarcer, and that global demand will keep rising, especially in rapidly developing countries like China and India. As a result, producers are asking very high prices to pump their oil. Now, it could be that these assumptions are all wrong—that the supply of oil will not be constricted going forward, that concerns about the Middle East are exaggerated, and that higher prices will lead people to cut back on energy consumption, shrinking demand. In that case, oil would turn out to have been hugely overpriced. But that won't be because of sinister speculators; it will be because oil producers and oil users collectively misread the future.

The difficulty for Congress, of course, is that none of the problems that have driven up the price of oil lend themselves to a quick fix, and most, like the boom in global demand and the inaccessibility of certain oil fields, aren't under our control at all. That's what makes speculators a perfect target: by going after them, Congress can demonstrate to voters that it understands their pain, and at the same time avoid doing anything that might require real sacrifice from Americans. Our dependence on foreign oil, together with the fiscal fecklessness that has helped reduce the value of the dollar, means that there is no easy way out of where we are. But in an election year that's hardly a message that anyone in Washington is going to deliver.

—*James Surowiecki*



For many people, it's important to find investments that have the potential to do well for th
world. Renewable energy sources and microloans are two of the many areas that may benef
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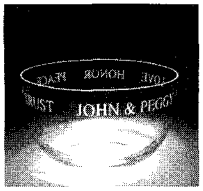

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ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

ROMEO, ROMEO

Mark Morris creates a ballet to a lost Prokofiev score, with a difference.

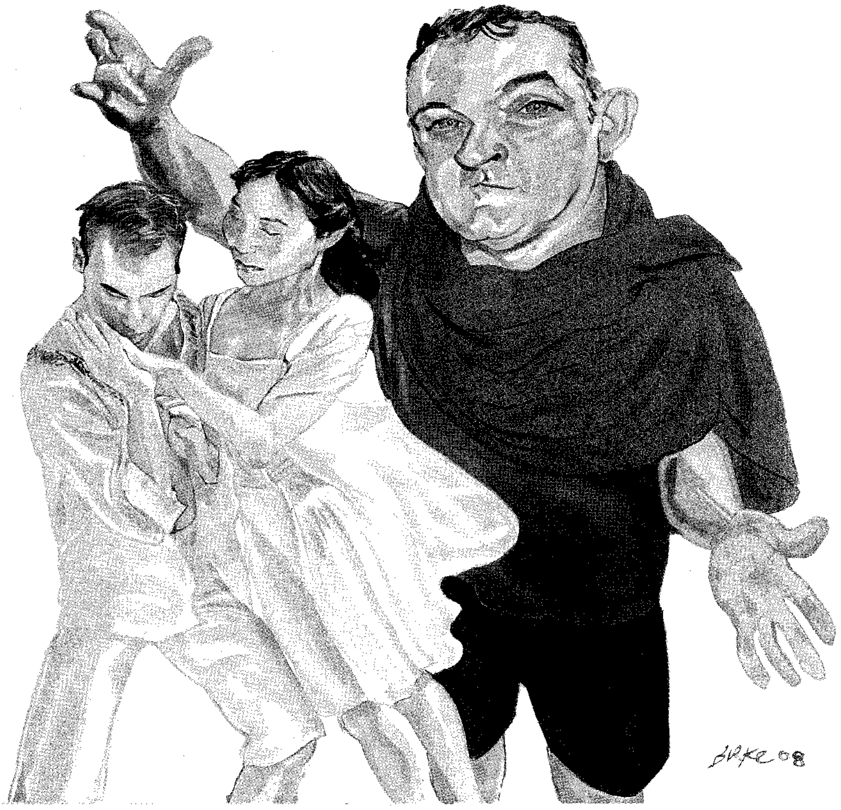
BY JOAN ACOCELLA

"Ladies," Mark Morris says to his female ensemble, "you're getting pussified. Like, 'I'm an adorable My Little Pony.' I don't want girly—I want womany. Smack your skirts. It drives men wild." In a large studio at the top of the Brooklyn headquarters of the Mark Morris Dance Group, Morris is rehearsing his new work, "Romeo & Juliet, on Motifs of Shakespeare." The ballet will have its première, with the American Symphony Orchestra, at the Bard College SummerScape festival, in Annandale-on-Hudson, on July 4th. Then, after touring, it will arrive at Lincoln Center, in May of next year. Morris is working on a tarantella that will be danced in Verona's town square. In Shakespeare's play, and in the score that Sergei Prokofiev composed, between 1935 and 1940, for the ballet version, there are several big scenes in this square, and they stand for the world, as opposed to the individual. It's a tough world, with feuds and vendettas, and it has no sympathy for young lovers. Morris tells the women in the tarantella to stop smiling—"No 'Oklahoma!,' please, no 'Whoopee!' I want this square to be a place where a woman could get socked in the face anytime she turned around, and a man could get killed." Soon, in the square, men will get killed—Mercutio, Tybalt. Morris is preparing for that. "I want you to be very, very sinister," he tells the dancers.

At the same time, he wants them to be fun. Low-down, salty, rude: Morris likes this side of life, and so do most of us. On a table in the studio are books on Italian hand gestures that Morris has asked the company to look at. In the square, the dancers bite their knuckles (anger) and swipe their chins (scorn) at one another. They give one another the finger. The spectacle is ugly and comical at the same time, a combination often seen in Morris's work. He cares about Romeo and Juliet, but he's also fond of the dirty old world.

Apart from Morris's assistant, Matthew Rose, and the rehearsal pianist, the only people required to be in the studio with him are the dancers cast in the scene he's working on, but they may number more than a dozen. And many members of the company come to rehearsals even when they're not in the scene in question. They're curious. By now, Morris is accustomed to having these people peer over his shoulder as he works. If they make noise, he yells at them, but otherwise he ignores them. At the start of rehearsal, he sits on a stool, facing the dancers, in baggy Bermudas, a T-shirt, and a sort of Indian shawl that he tosses around expressively. "Where am I?" he says to Matthew Rose. Rose answers, "Twenty-two," the scene number. Morris looks at the score, and either sings the notes to himself—maybe four bars, maybe more—or asks the pianist to play them. He listens and thinks. In that space of time, he composes the steps, or almost. He gets up from his stool; moves onto the "stage," the part of the studio that the dancers are standing in; takes someone's place ("I'm you—get out of the way"); and tries out the steps he wants that dancer to perform. The dancer, standing beside him, will reproduce what he's doing, and memorize it on the spot. Then Morris will move on to the person that dancer is dancing with and go through the same process. If Romeo and Juliet are in the scene, the second Romeo and Juliet (these two taxing roles have been double-cast) will be copying the new steps in a corner of the studio.

In the town square, for example, Juliet's nurse (Lauren Grant) enters. She is looking for Romeo, but as she comes in she sees Peter (Samuel Black), her servant, among the tarantella women. This annoys her. Morris, taking her place, tells her what is going on in her mind. ("Peter? Peter? Where the hell are you?") A long passage of music follows. "O.K.," he says to the Nurse. "Here's this long passage of music, so you're going to have a dance, a gorgeous dance, to get everyone's attention." In that number, there are three eighth notes that are marked staccato. Morris listens to these spiky notes and decides that, on each of them, Peter will yank the Nurse through the air, teasing her, to distract her from her bad temper. He practices this with Peter. (They don't actually perform the lifts. They "mark" them—that is, indicate them loosely.) Then he puts the Nurse back in with Peter and has them dance the new passage repeatedly, as he tinkers with the rhythms. He's still not pleased, but he looks at the clock and moves on. He tells Peter to lift the Nurse one more time, but prettily. When she lands, he says, she will do some happy steps: "Rond de jambe, rond de jambe," a circling of the leg. Then: "Sunrise rond de jambe," which seems to mean that she should accompany the opening of the leg with a great spreading of the arms, because that's what he does. "Seeds," he says. "Like sowing seeds."


Morris (right) has long expressed discomfort with creating classic male-female duets.

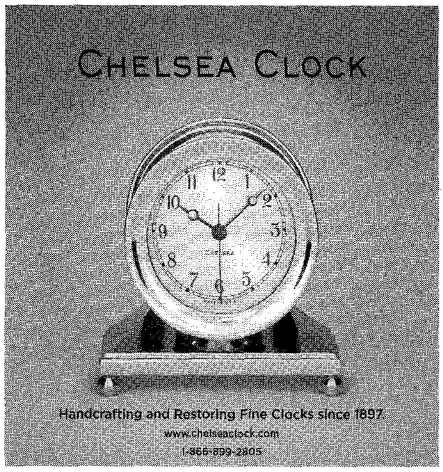
PHILIP BURKE

Morris's habit of standing inside a dance as he creates it is different from what many other choreographers do. They devise the steps from the front, facing the dancers. When steps are made from the inside, the primary concern will be for how they feel on the body. When they are created from outside, the main care will be for the picture they make: how they will look to an audience. Morris is famous for the visceral quality of his dances—the fact that they are fleshy, muscular, that you can feel them on your own body—and this is surely due in part to his habit of choreographing from inside, or starting there.

Eventually, though, he moves back to his stool, and asks the dancers to show him what he has just taught them. As they are doing so, he tells them more about their motivations. To the Nurse, as she spies Peter among the women: "I'm going to smack you. No, first I'm going to dance." To Peter: "Phew! She's not mad. I think I'll lift her." To the ensemble: "Oh, look at that nice thing she's doing. We're going to do it, too." He makes corrections. To Peter, who seems to be having trouble lifting the Nurse: "What? She's too much for you? Pick her the fuck up!" All the while, he makes jokes, and cackles at them appreciatively. "You're driving me to drink!" he yells, and takes a swig from a half-gallon Stolichnaya bottle—it contains water—at his side. (I asked Maile Okamura, one of the Juliets, if it wasn't hard, after this comedy in the studio, to produce a tragic dance. "Oh, no," she replied. "We're used to him.") At his command, the dancers repeat the new passage, and he nudges it into the shape he wants. "Excellent," he says. "Kind of. There! I made up the dance. God, this is exhausting."

"Romeo and Juliet" is about passionate love between a man and a woman. That, historically, is the chief subject of dance, but it is not an important subject of Morris's work. You could say that this is because he is homosexual, but many homosexual choreographers have created burning male-female duets. They just make the conversion. Morris, to my knowledge, was the first major choreographer to say that he was uncomfortable with this. What, then, was he going to do with the story of Romeo and Juliet, which is almost the prototype of romantic love, the love that kills? But, in the score that he is using, the love doesn't kill.

In 2003, Simon Morrison, a musicologist who teaches at Princeton, went to Moscow to do research for his book "The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years." (It will be published in the fall.) Prokofiev spent the nineteen-twenties and early thirties in Europe, and there he turned himself into a fully modernist composer: sharp, dissonant, spare. Then, in the mid-thirties, he was wooed back to the Soviet Union, where his style soon became more expansive, more emotionalized, in keeping with the dictates of socialist realism. Morrison knew that it was in 1935, right around the time of Prokofiev's return, that the composer wrote his original score for "Romeo and Juliet." What he didn't know was that this "Romeo and Juliet"—which he discovered, more or less complete, in a yellowed folder in the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art—was quite different from the score that finally premièred, in 1940. The 1935 version had twenty minutes of music that were deleted from the later version;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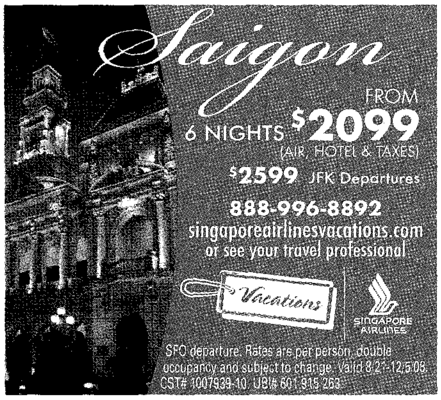
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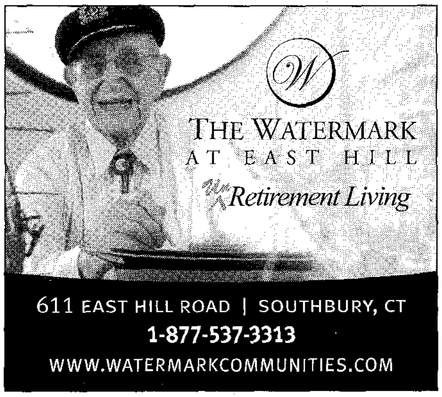
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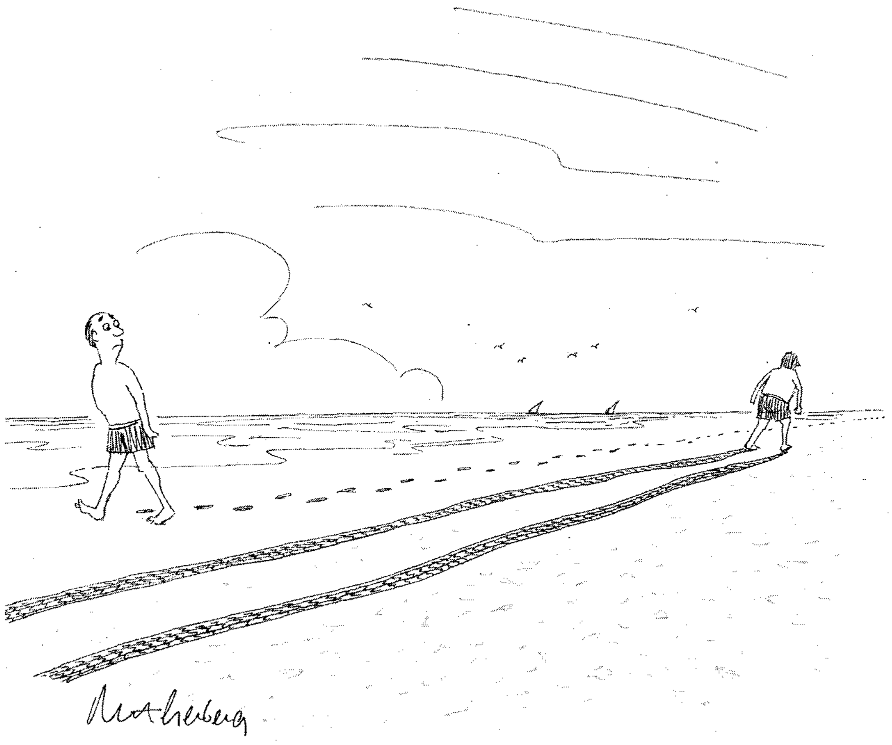

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the order of the numbers was different, and so, in large measure, was the style. "All the great melodies were there, but in the 1940 version they were reharmonized, re-rhythmicized," Morrison told me. "The original score was lean and mean."

The other thing that Morrison discovered in the archives was the documentation—letters, diaries, memoirs—of the process by which Prokofiev was forced to alter the score: "a four-year nightmare," Morrison says. A few months after the score was finished, Stalin's Terror began, and, one by one, the government officials backing Prokofiev's project were arrested. The ballet, originally scheduled to have its première at the Bolshoi, in Moscow, in the 1935-36 season, was cancelled. Then a troupe in Czechoslovakia performed a version, choreographed by its director, but to different music (two suites that Prokofiev, despairing of the full score's ever being played, had carved out of it). Then the Kirov, in Leningrad, decided to pick up the project, but Leonid Lavrovsky, the Kirov's artistic director—and, eventually, the choreographer of the first Russian version—laid down conditions. Basically, Prokofiev was told to bring the score in line with the new artistic conservatism that accompanied the Terror. To show off the stars, he had to insert long solos for both Romeo and Juliet. He complied, under protest. Then he was told that the music had to be less jumpy and dissonant. It needed more repeats, and the orchestration had to be fatter, louder. "Are you ordering me to orchestrate like Glazunov?" Prokofiev asked. He flatly refused, at which point Lavrovsky and his colleagues reorchestrated the score behind his back. "They padded it, monumentalized it, laid on the violins," Morrison says.

The most striking change had been made earlier, however. Shortly after finishing the piano score, Prokofiev did a run-through for a Bolshoi committee, and some of these adjudicators told him that he should change his ending. In the original libretto, which Prokofiev wrote in collaboration with the theatre director Sergei Radlov, the lovers do not die. Juliet wakes up in time; she and Romeo escape. For Prokofiev and Radlov to discard Shakespeare's ending was a bold step—accordingly, the ballet was retitled "Romeo & Juliet, on Motifs of Shakespeare"—but both men considered themselves experimental artists, and the change probably seemed to them refreshingly iconoclastic. (In 1926, in Monte Carlo, Diaghilev's Ballets

Russes had produced a “Romeo and Juliet” that ended with the lovers taking off in an airplane. Prokofiev had worked for the Ballets Russes in Europe, and he had almost certainly seen that piece.) Apparently, Prokofiev and Radlov also thought that their version, with young idealists defeating a cruel old order, was a better advertisement for the Revolution.

But Morrison believes that the real reason for the happy ending was Christian Science, the sect that Mary Baker Eddy founded in the United States, in the eighteen-sixties, and to which Prokofiev and his wife converted, in 1924. The fundamental idea of Christian Science is that material existence is an illusion; the world is entirely spirit. Therefore, there is no real pain, no evil, no death. When we supposedly die, we simply move into a different sphere, where we go on living, unbewildered by the doubts that accompany earthly life. It is to this higher level, Morrison says, that Prokofiev transports Romeo and Juliet at the end of the 1935 version. Such an ending is not “happy” in the conventional sense; the lovers do not set up house in Verona and have children. But neither do they die—because death does not exist.

Morrison described to me the last ten minutes of the 1935 score, which include a pas de deux for Romeo and Juliet in a grove to which they have escaped: “Prokofiev called it a grove, but what seems to happen is that Romeo and Juliet walk out of their world, into a sort of third realm. All the major themes of the ballet come back, but transformed into a very thick, slow waltz, the lovers’ final duet. After that, Prokofiev had three and a half minutes of ‘unscripted’ music—no dancing, just music. The themes return again, but then the whole thing liquidates. You have a sort of swirling rotation, in C major. Everything spirals upward. Then it just stops: a C-major Heaven.” That ten-minute conclusion, the duet plus the undanced music, is what Prokofiev, at the insistence of the theatre administrators on whom his ballet depended, removed, and replaced with the great, weeping finale—in which Romeo and Juliet do indeed die—so familiar to us now. Morrison feels that this revised ending was a comedown, as was the whole 1940 score, and that it foreshadowed a coarsening of Prokofiev’s style during his Soviet years.

Bard College, for its 2008 music festival, was planning a Prokofiev celebration. Morrison was one of the advisers for this project, so when he found the 1935 score he took it to Leon Botstein, the president of Bard and the co-artistic director of the festival, and suggested that Morris be asked to choreograph a ballet to it. Soon afterward, Morris went to Bard to receive an honorary doctorate. “There was a lunch before the ceremony,” he told me, “and it was in a tent on the lawn of the president’s house. We were all freezing to death. I went into the house to find a bathroom, and there was Leon Botstein. He looked up at me and said I was just the person he was looking for. Had I heard about the discovery of Prokofiev’s original version of ‘Romeo and Juliet’? I had no idea what he was talking about, so I made a joke: ‘You mean the one with the happy ending?’ And he said, ‘How did you know?’ ”

The best-known modern interpretations of “Romeo and Juliet”—the Kenneth MacMillan ballet (1965) and the Franco Zeffirelli movie (1968)—are in the style of Romantic realism that the twentieth century inherited from the nineteenth. That is, they use lifelike detail for color and pungency, but the emphasis is on private emotion, especially passionate love. Morris, too, can be a realist, but he goes further. The Verona he has created is a regular, even bourgeois, place. Lord and Lady Capulet stroll in the square, like everyone else; Lady Capulet waves to her neighbors. In the lovers’ “balcony” scene—which in Morris’s version involves no balcony (Prokofiev placed the scene in a darkened ballroom, after the ball)—Juliet concludes her ardent avowals by unromantically indicating, as does Shakespeare’s Juliet, that she now expects Romeo to marry her. She won’t go to bed with him until she gets the ring.

Sex is also treated in a no-nonsense manner. This, again, is in keeping with Shakespeare’s text. (Morris: “It’s all prick, prick, prick. Just dicks, all over the place.”) In most ballet versions, Romeo and Juliet rise from the bed after their wedding night in full ballet dress. In

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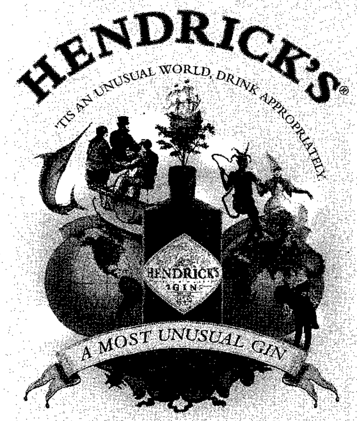

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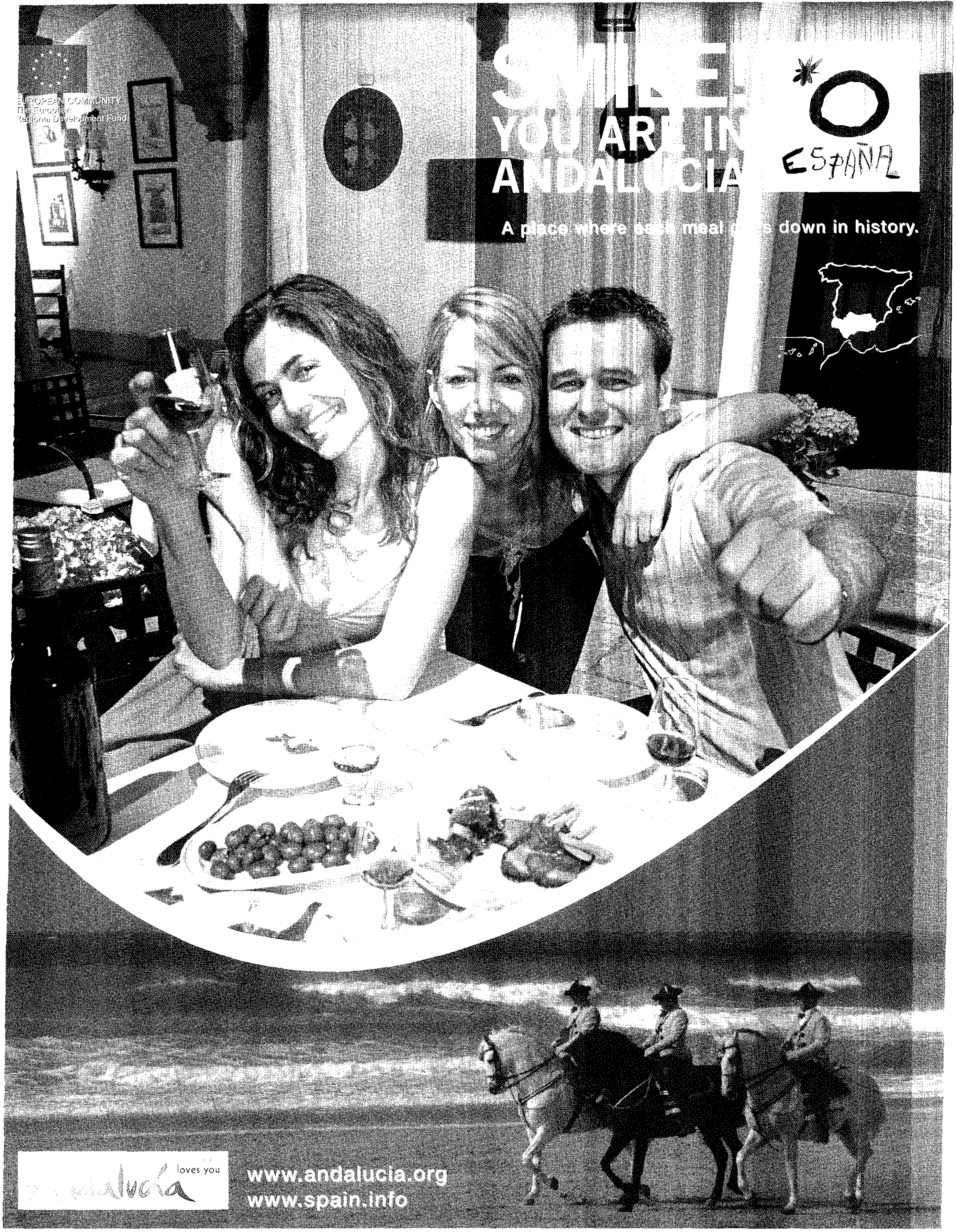
Morris’s ballet, they are buck naked. Thanks to careful deployment of the sheets, we don’t see much of their bodies, but they do. With his back to us, Romeo arches his torso over Juliet’s; she reciprocates. “Here’s what I’ve got,” they seem to say. “All for you.” Equally frank is the dance they do after getting out of bed. This is the first big, straight (noncomic) erotic duet that Morris has ever created, and he goes at it full blast. “You think you’re the only people on earth who have ever had sex,” Morris tells the couple. At one point, Juliet clips herself onto Romeo’s shoulder in such a way that his face is pretty much between her legs. Morris coaches them: “Open, open to each other. Olfactory!”

In giving his dancers psychological cues, Morris is trying to convey a specific emotion. Elsewhere, though, he titrates emotion, controls its flow. In Shakespeare’s play, and in Prokofiev’s libretto, Romeo and Juliet’s bedroom scene is immediately followed by a wrenching encounter in which her parents, ignorant of her marriage to Romeo, demand that she marry Paris, the husband they have chosen for her. Once they exit, MacMillan (like Lavrovsky) gives Juliet her biggest, most scenery-eating moment. After several bars of turbulent meditation—what will she do?—she decides to go to Friar Laurence, and she runs headlong to his cell, with a great cloak, the extension of her emotion, rippling behind her. She looks like the Spanish Armada. In Morris’s version, she simply gets up from her bed, picks up her cloak from a chair, and walks out of the room. Furthermore, before arriving at the priest’s cell she takes time to do a little dance. All this lowers the emotional temperature of the passage. When I queried Morris about this, he said, “I studied the score, not the ballets.” Then he went on: “Look, I know what people’s automatic responses are. And sometimes you work with them, and sometimes you work against them. In almost any scene, you can go with an applause ending or a transitional ending. It’s like, sometimes you think, Oh, shit, please don’t kiss now, and they don’t, and you say, ‘Thank God.’ At other times, here it comes, here it comes, and—yay!—it happens. But you can’t bring out the basket of puppies every time.”

Apropos of that, I asked him about the fact that his pas de deux have very few high lifts. (MacMillan’s “Romeo and Juliet”—also Lavrovsky’s—is full of vaulting, love-gone-crazy lifts.) “I’m an enemy of the innovative lift,” he answered. “It looks like ice dancing to me. It also looks like kidnapping—violence against women. I have lifts, all over the place, but they’re not the ethereal weightlessness of the tragic lady.”

As the ballet goes on, it gets more abstract. Romeo and Juliet may have a big, horny duet after their wedding night, but that’s the end of that. (Morris says that this is true to Shakespeare: “In the play, there’s not an ever-after. They’re done. They have one night. Then they never get to know anything more about each other. Maybe there’s nothing more to know.”) When, in rehearsals, Juliet awakened from the sleeping potion—that is, when Prokofiev’s original libretto departed from the play, and the lovers were reunited—Morris told the dancers that the duet they had to do now was entirely different. “This is a magic transformation,” he said. To Juliet: “Don’t stick your tits in his face. This is post-lust.” To Romeo: “Don’t keep looking at her. Don’t turn it into the thing it’s almost like”—a love duet. “Spool around her. It’s a *design* now.” To the two of them: “I’m headed for *nothing*, really nothing. Nothing is hard to do and still keep the audience interested.” By “nothing,” he means no realism, no psychology. Here, and in the couple’s final duet (which is performed to Prokofiev’s “unscripted” music), he wants the “third realm” that Morrison spoke of in relation to the 1935 score: tragic calm, white light. From his earliest pieces—for example, the 1981 “Gloria”—Morris has tended toward a sort of West Coast Franciscanism, a plain, austere spirituality. So it is here.

This conclusion is a little like the last scene of “The Graduate,” in which Benjamin and Elaine, escaping from her wedding to another man, get on a bus and just smile at each other briefly. As Morris points out, the ending of his “Romeo” also resembles that of his “The Hard Nut” (1991). There, as here, the lead couple, having triumphed over adversity, seem curiously untriumphant. They don’t trapeze around. They merely do a quiet dance, reiterating earlier themes, and then they go off into—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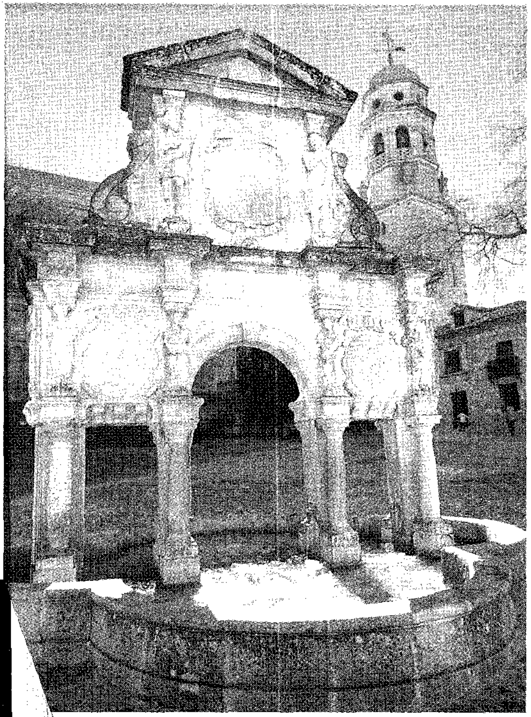

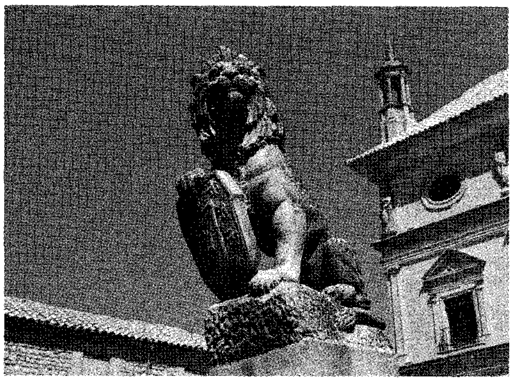

TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: BAEZA © TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN; ÚBEDA © KEN WELSH/ALAMY

Andalucía: Where the Renaissance Reigns

The main road leading to the twin cities of **Úbeda** and **Baeza** snakes over the mountains, then dips into the Guadalquivir River valley. Long miles of olive groves breeze by, until Renaissance buildings rise incongruously from the ochre-colored landscape. Often compared with such Italian wonders as Brescia or Ferrara, Úbeda and Baeza were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003. Both of these Andalucian cities are credited with introducing Renaissance ideas to Spain—and nowhere else in the country do the clean, symmetrical lines of that era so clearly dominate.

Just as Barcelona had its Antonio Gaudí, Úbeda owes its grandeur to the inspiration of the sixteenth-century architect Andrés de Vandelvira, who was commissioned by the local nobility to emulate the palaces and public works of the Medicis. This small city of only thirty-six thousand contains more than a hundred mansions and palaces, and in its old town, a short walk in any direction guarantees an encounter with history.

Úbeda's stateliest square, **Plaza de Vázquez de Molina,** is considered the best example of Renaissance town planning in Spain. Lining the square is the **Hospital de Santiago,** a cultural and conference center with a vast central courtyard and polished white Carrara marble columns. Other structures include the **Sacred Chapel of El Salvador,** the **Collegiate Church of Santa María de los Reales Alcázares,** and the city hall, called **Palace of the Chains** because of its decorative ironwork. Also on Plaza Vázquez de Molina: a sixteenth-century palace that serves as a thirty-six-room parador for overnight guests.

Baeza—less than six miles away—is also packed with Renaissance palaces organized around cobblestone squares. It's a modern, working city that owes much of its wealth to olive oil (which the locals call *oro liquido*, or liquid gold). However, many of its public works—a granary, a corn exchange, a meat market, and a prison—were designed by de Vandelvira. The architect also contributed to the Baeza cathedral and the former convent of San Francisco. A restaurant named for him is now located within the convent. Many of its dishes are infused with olive oil from the surrounding groves. Dining in both of these cities is an unmatched pleasure. Local delicacies include lamb, partridge, and pork loin strips prepared with olive oil.

Many travelers to this part of Andalucía also spend time in **Sierra de Cazorla Natural Park,** a thickly forested nature preserve that's home to wild boar and Spanish ibex, along with golden eagles that soar above limestone cliffs carved by time.

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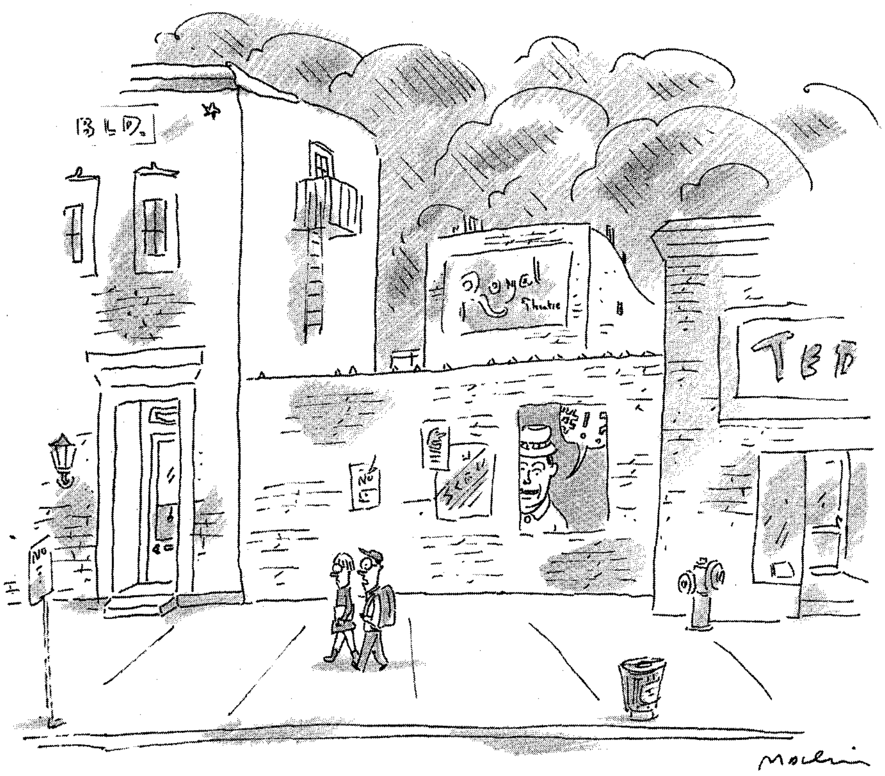
"Where?" Morris says. "Eternity, maybe." "Romeo" recalls "The Hard Nut" in other ways as well. Both are new takes on old ballets. ("The Hard Nut" is Morris's version of "The Nutcracker.") In both, an innocent young couple confront an extremely venal adult world. In "The Hard Nut," the little heroine, Marie, goes from passivity to a great resolve; in "Romeo," Juliet does the same. During the lovers' pas de deux, she often takes the lead; she's the one who seems to know where they're going. "I don't want her dependent on him all the time," Morris said in rehearsal. Throughout his career, if I am not mistaken, Morris has trusted his women—their ability to dance and, especially, their willingness to take direction from him—more than his men.

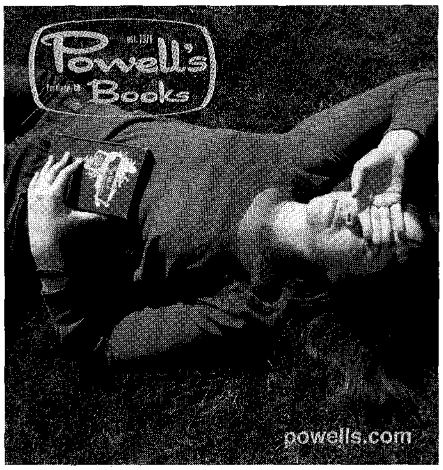
Morris had difficulties with Prokofiev's score. "Like all music that's written for dance, it has too much music for some things and not enough for other things," he says. "Friar Laurence says, 'Here's a potion,' and it takes five pages of music to do that. Then, there are ten people having a sword fight, and one of them dies, and that's four bars." Also, even in the 1935 version the musical themes return again and again. Morris says that he has not altered a single bar of the score, and he defends Prokofiev's repetitions, saying that each time a theme returns it does so in a different guise. In the studio, however, he could be heard to mutter things like "Everything happens a thousand times."

Then, there was the matter of constructing the drama: "Which story points are urgently necessary, as opposed to what can be dropped, and what can be conflated? What can be put out of sequence—the Shakespeare sequence versus the Prokofiev sequence versus the my-show-business-sense sequence? Who's changing costumes? Who's dead? How many people do I still have? Who's stage right and who's stage left? Where do I have time to change the sets? Is the music enough just to listen to for a while, or does there have to be action to it?"

There was also the question of how Shakespeare's drama would fit on the Mark Morris Dance Group, which has sixteen members, eight women and eight men (though eleven additional dancers have been hired for this production). In Morris's "Romeo," Tybalt and



"Someday we'll look back at this time in our lives and be unable to remember it."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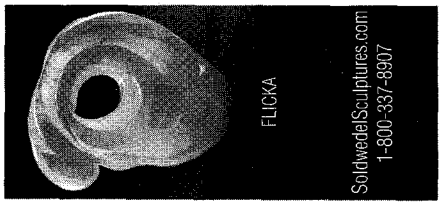
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Mercutio, the two most important men in the show, apart from the hero, are played by women, Julie Worden and Amber Darragh. Morris has said in the past that he wanted to push both male and female dancing past the agreed-upon limits; he wanted to give his men opportunities to be softer, and his women chances to be tougher. He may have had that in mind when he cast Worden, a beautiful and reticent dancer, as the brutal Tybalt. (If so, he got his wish. At least in rehearsal, Worden was ecstatically violent, slicing through the air like a blade.) This is an appealing idea, but Morris told me that the real reason for the cross-gender casting was simply that he wanted more big roles for his women than Shakespeare provided.

In rehearsal, Morris sometimes got stumped, and said so: "I'm very concerned about what to do here. I don't know what to do. Let's do it some other time, like Friday." Once, he lost patience and walked out of the studio. ("I'll be back in fifteen minutes," he said curtly, and he was.) That happens to all artists, but not in front of a dozen spectators. Nor do most artists have to depend entirely on the coöperation of others. Morris often dilates at length on what geniuses his dancers are, but in rehearsal he can be cutting: "Every time you're doing those arms, do something else." "Instead of non-dancing, how about dancing?" His most frequent correction was that he wanted the company to dance harder, with more attack. His other, constant complaint was about entropy—the fact that the dancers, two days after he taught them something, would start to slur it. Composers can comfort themselves that, if one performance is not to their liking, the next may be. The score survives. In dance, there is no score. The piece *is* what is performed. On the last day of studio rehearsals, Morris could not correct anything, because the run-through was being taped, but he could be heard expostulating, under his breath, to Matthew Rose: "That step was developpé. Not a kick. Developpé." "That used to be fourth, fourth, jeté. Now it's just a walk. Put it back."

Some of this will be corrected before the première, and some of it won't. Another problem that many choreographers have is an ironclad schedule. Between rehearsals for "Romeo," Morris made two other pieces, which had been commissioned long before. Soon after the final studio rehearsal of "Romeo," the company left New York for a five-city tour, where it performed the old works that, just as much as new works, are its reason for being. The dancers came home in mid-June and had two days to greet their spouses and wash their clothes. Then they moved to Bard, and resumed work on "Romeo," with, however, a side gig at the Tanglewood Music Festival. "Romeo" will have six days of stage rehearsals before its première.

In those rehearsals, Morris will be able to tinker a little more with the choreography, but not much, because now he will be dealing with many other matters as well. The orchestra will join the dancers, an encounter that is rarely without incident. Costumes will be worn for the first time, and some dancers will discover that they can't do their steps in those pants. The props will arrive—real swords instead of the plastic ones the dancers rehearsed with—and there will be trouble there. In the meantime, Morris will be listening to the music for his next two ballets, one to Beethoven and the other to Charles Ives. He will start rehearsing them two weeks after the première of "Romeo."

That's the way it is with ballets. When Frederick Ashton choreographed his "Romeo and Juliet," in 1955, the final scene was thrown together in two hours the day before the dress rehearsal. When Antony Tudor created a "Romeo," for American Ballet Theatre, in 1943, he premièred it unfinished. Before the curtain, he came out, in full makeup and costume (he was Tybalt), and told the members of the audience that if they wanted to see the ending they could come back four days later. Morris's show was going more smoothly than that, and while at certain points he openly despaired ("Oh, this is awful, so horrible"), at other moments, when he saw what he had made, he admitted that he was pleased: "That's gorgeous. Who knew that that was coming? I didn't." "Gee, it makes sense. It makes this music make sense." And he smiled on his "Romeo." ♦

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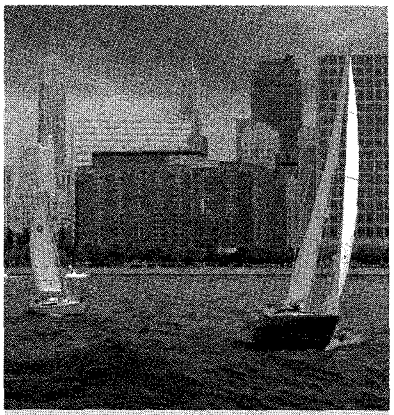

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MY AIRLINE

BY DAVID OWEN

Luggage surcharges are old news at my airline. I've had them for years: for second bags that don't contain golf clubs, for cardboard boxes held together with twine or duct tape, for long, rolled-up things that you bring into the cabin, and for any carry-on item that I have to help you stow or retrieve, or that you jam into the overhead compartment sideways, so that it crushes my sports coat, which I have folded using the time-tested inside-out method, or whose size forces me to place my briefcase in a compartment other than one directly over my row. The charge is fifty dollars, exact change only. From now on, I will also be charging fifty dollars for any piece of luggage on which you have written your name and address in gigantic letters.

Previously, at check-in, I have visually estimated your weight. From now on, you may be required to step onto the luggage scale. You must also certify, before boarding, that no part of your arm or torso will extend over your armrest and touch me or cause my arm or side to get hot at any time during the flight. If the test calipers at the boarding gate cannot be passed freely over your entire body, you will be required to purchase an additional ticket and to sit in the exact center of your two seats. Furthermore, you must keep your feet stowed directly in front of you at all times in such a way that your legs do not touch my legs or penetrate any part of the imaginary vertical plane separating your seating space from mine. Fifty dollars.

Staring blankly at the seat back in front of you for the entire flight is no longer permitted on my airline. If you have brought nothing to read, a book will be provided for your use, at a charge of fifty dollars. Flipping through the airline magazine or the duty-free catalogue in your seat pocket is allowed only while the aircraft is on the ground and other reading matter is temporarily inaccessible. You may no longer hum or do any form of beadwork. If you wish to attempt a Sudoku puzzle during the flight, you must demonstrate to my satisfaction that you realize that the nine spaces in every row and column must each contain a unique digit, and that the nine squares that make up the over-all Sudoku square cannot be completed without consideration for how they fit into the entire puzzle. Do you understand this? No? Fifty dollars.

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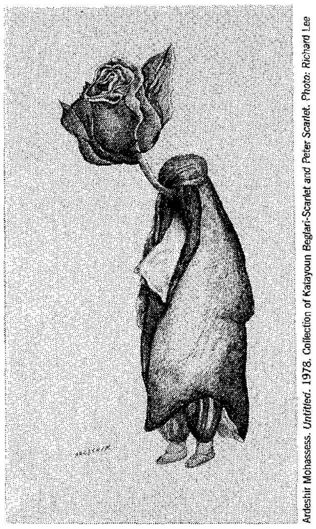

Ardeshir Mohassess. Untitled, 1978. Collection of Katayoun Beglari-Scarlet and Peter Scarlet. Photo: Richard Lee

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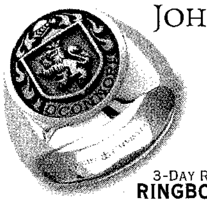

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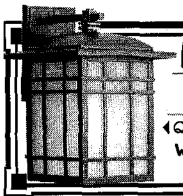

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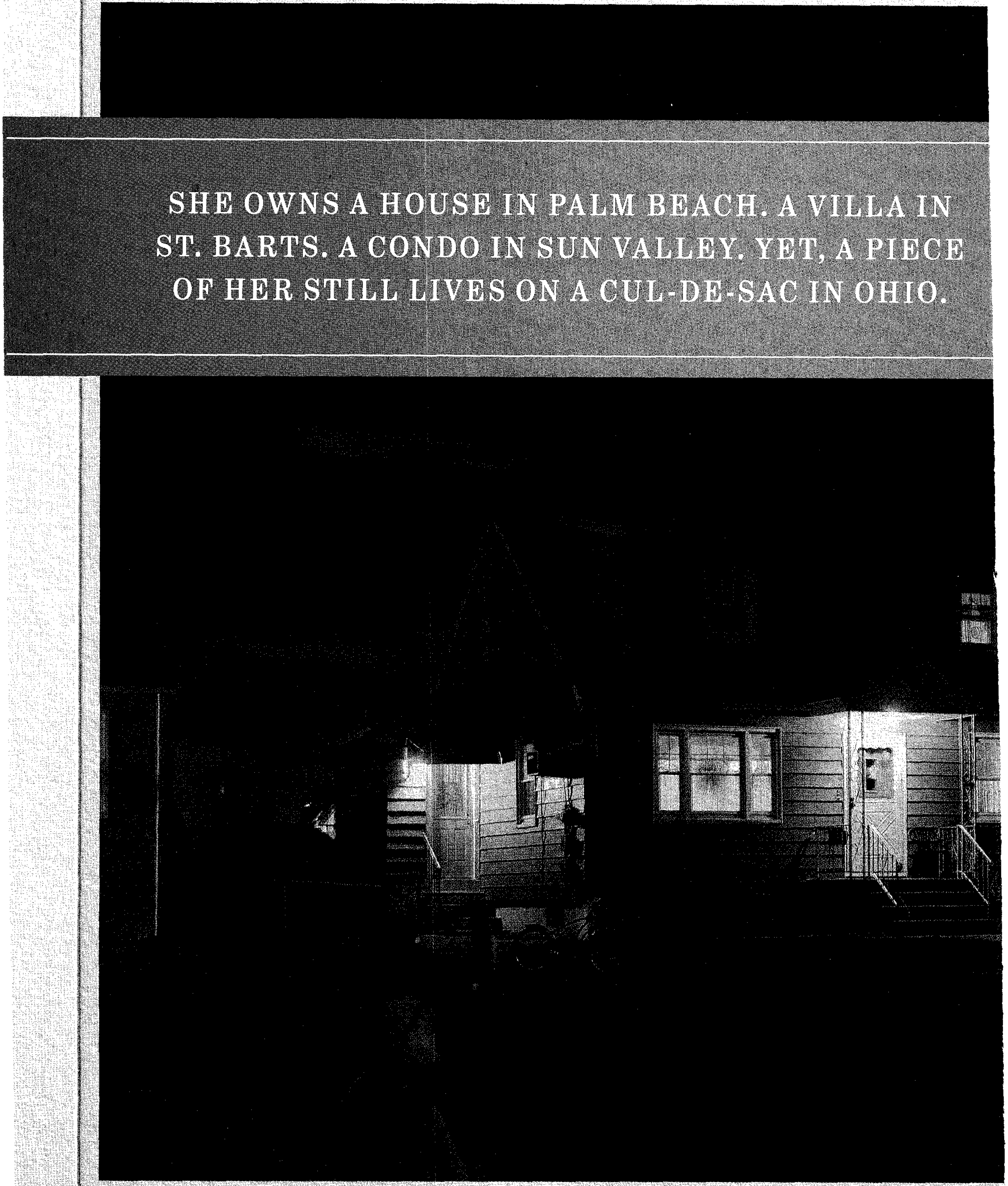
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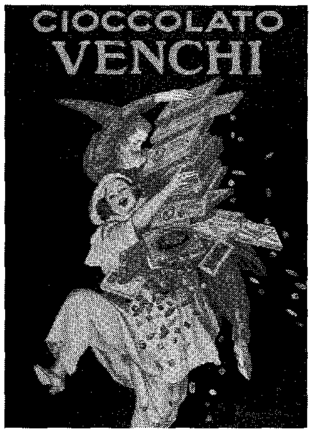

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A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE BACK OF THE WORLD

The troubling genius of G. K. Chesterton.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

This year is the hundredth anniversary of G. K. Chesterton's "The Man Who Was Thursday," and it has come out in at least two new editions on the occasion. "The Man Who Was Thursday" is one of the hidden hinges of twentieth-century writing, the place where, before our eyes, the nonsense-fantastical tradition of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear pivots and becomes the nightmare-fantastical tradition of Kafka and Borges. It is also, along with Chesterton's "The Napoleon of Notting Hill," the nearest thing that this masterly writer wrote to a masterpiece.

Chesterton is an easy writer to love—a brilliant sentence-maker, a humorist, a journalist of endless appetite and invention. His aphorisms alone are worth the price of admission, better than any but Wilde's. Even his standard-issue zingers are first-class—"Americans are the people who describe their use of alcohol and tobacco as vices"; "There is more simplicity in the man who eats caviar on impulse than in the man who eats grape-nuts on principle"; " 'My country, right or wrong,' is a thing that no true patriot would think of saying. . . . It is like saying, 'My mother, drunk or sober' "—while the deeper ones are genuine Catholic koans, pregnant and profound: "Blasphemy depends on belief, and is fading with it. If anyone doubts this, let him sit down seriously and try to think blasphemous thoughts about Thor." Or: "The function of the imagination is not to make strange things settled, so much as to make settled things strange." Or: "A key has no logic to its shape. Its logic is: it turns the lock."

But he is a difficult writer to defend. Those of us who are used to pressing his writing on friends have the hard job of protecting him from his detractors, who think he was a nasty anti-Semite and medievalizing reactionary, and the still harder one of protecting him from his admirers, who pretend that he was not. His Catholic devotees are legion and fanatic—the small Ignatius Press has taken on the heroic job of publishing everything he wrote in a uniform edition, and is already up to the thirty-fifth volume—but not always helpful to his non-cult reputation, especially when they insist on treating his gassy Church apologetics as though they were as interesting as his funny and suggestively mystical Christian allegories. He has a loving following among liberal Catholics, like Garry Wills and Wilfrid Sheed, and even nonbelievers, like Martin Gardner. But his most strenuous advocates are mainly conservative pre-Vatican II types who are indignant about his neglect without stopping to reflect how much their own uncritical enthusiasm may have contributed to it.

Chesterton is one of that company of writers whom we call Edwardian (though they stretch back to the last years of Victoria), a golden generation that emerged in the eighteen-nineties with personas seeming as fully formed as the silent comedians of the Mack Sennett studio, complete with style, costume, and gesture. Writing in London at a time when hundreds of morning newspapers and as many magazines competed for copy, and where mass literacy had created a mass audience without yet entirely removing respect for intellect, they made themselves as much as they made their sentences. We see them as we read them: Shaw all crinkled, beaming rationality, Kipling beetle-browed, bespectacled imperial intensity. Chesterton embodied the hearty side of mysticism, cape thrown across his shoulders, broad-brimmed hat on his head and sword-stick at his side, a hungry Catholic Pantagruel in London. (The last generation of writers who had anything like the same signature presence were the Americans who first encountered television, in the fifties—Mailer and Capote and Vidal—and for the same reason: they lent prestige to a new mass medium that hadn't yet learned how easily it could get along without them.)

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Chesterton's autobiography, begun in the late twenties and published just after his death, in 1936, tells his early story more or less accurately. Born into a conventional and unreligious family in suburban London in 1874, he had an extraordinary sensitivity to the secret life of things. In a chapter titled "The Man with the Golden Key," perfect in its delicate unwinding of the tension between truth and play in a child's life, he explains that the transforming event of his early life was watching puppet shows in a toy theatre that his father had made for him. (The man with the golden key was a prince whose purpose he can no longer recall in a play whose plot he can no longer remember; but the purposefulness and romance of the figure stay with him.) Chesterton's point is that childhood is not a time of illusion but a time when illusion and fact exist (as they should) at the same level of consciousness, when the story and the world are equally numinous:

> If this were a ruthless realistic modern story, I should of course give a most heartrending account of how my spirit was broken with disappointment, on discovering that the prince was only a painted figure. But this is not a ruthless realistic modern story. On the contrary, it is a true story. And the truth is that I do not remember that I was in any way deceived or in any way undeceived. The whole point is that I did like the toy theatre even when I knew it was a toy theatre. I did like the cardboard figures, even when I found they were of cardboard. The white light of wonder that shone on the whole business was not any sort of trick. . . . It seems to me that when I came out of the house and stood on the hill of houses, where the roads sank steeply towards Holland Park, and terraces of new red houses could look out across a vast hollow and see far away the sparkle of the Crystal Palace (and seeing it was juvenile sport in those parts), I was subconsciously certain then, as I am consciously certain now, that there was the white and solid road and the worthy beginning of the life of man; and that it is man who afterwards darkens it with dreams or goes astray from it in self-deception. It is only the grown man who lives a life of make-believe and pretending; and it is he who has his head in a cloud.

The other epiphany concerned limits, localism. "All my life I have loved edges; and the boundary line that brings one thing sharply against another," he writes. "All my life I have loved frames and limits; and I will maintain that the largest wilderness looks larger seen through a window. To the grief of all grave dramatic critics, I will still assert that the perfect drama must strive to rise to the higher ecstasy of the peepshow." The two central insights of his work are here. First, the quarrel between storytelling, fiction, and reality is misdrawn as a series of illusions that we outgrow, or myths that we deny, when it is a sequence of stories that we inhabit. The second is not that small is beautiful but that the beautiful is always small, that we cannot have a clear picture in white light of abstractions, but only of a row of houses at a certain time of day, and that we go wrong when we extend our loyalties to things much larger than a puppet theatre. (And this, in turn, is fine, because the puppet theatre contains the world.)

This vision, not yet specifically religious, though determinedly antimaterialist, helped launch Chesterton into the world that he went out to conquer. After a failed attempt at art school and a flirtation with politics, he began, at the turn of the century, writing pop journalism. He was an immediate hit. (He wrote a regular column for the *Illustrated London News* for more than a quarter century.) He was a big man: six feet four, and constantly expanding outward, from too much food and ale. Bernard Shaw liked to refer to Chesterton and his close friend the Catholic poet and philosopher Hilaire Belloc as if they were a single right-wing Carrollian monster, the Chesterbelloc.

Chesterton is the great critic of homogenization, but his localism had an ugly side.

(Appearance is the great sorter-out of literary fame; it is hard to become an iconic writer without first looking like an icon.)

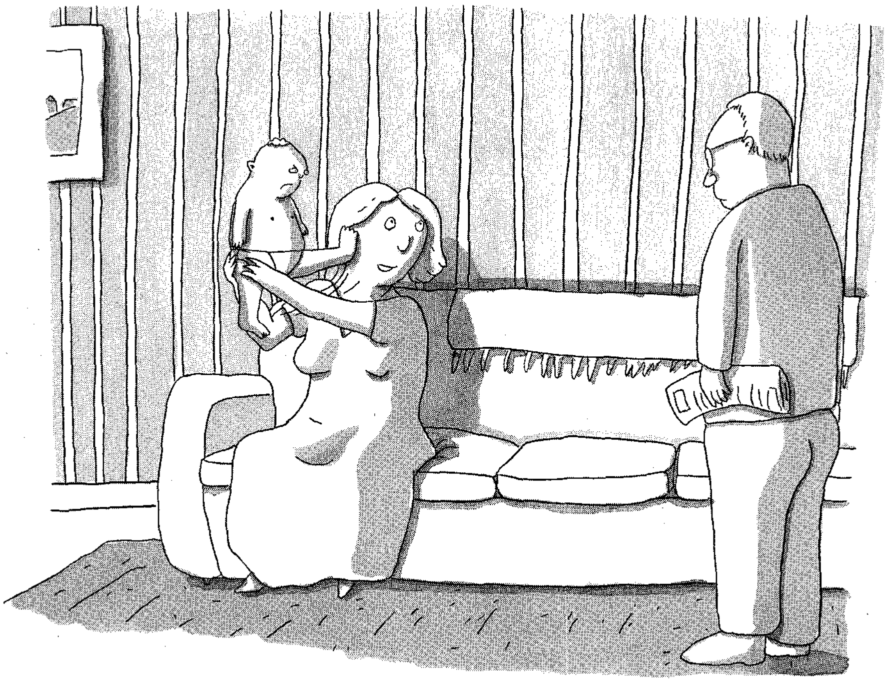
A certain kind of fatuous materialist progressivism was ascendant—the progressivism of Shaw and Wells and Beatrice and Sidney Webb, which envisaged a future of unending technological advance. The illusions of faith would be dispelled in an empire of slow-chewed spinach, rational spelling, and workers' reading circles. Against this, the young Chesterton's themes, the superiority of the local and the primacy of the imaginary, were irresistible. As he recognized, the papers wanted what they always want: the passionate assertion of the opposing point, the unexpected view in clown makeup, the contrarian as comedian. And that he gave, understanding perfectly the role he was to play. He could appeal to heaven, but he never put on airs. Discussing the "mystery" of his Fleet Street success, he wrote, "I have a notion that the real advice I could give to a young journalist, now that I am myself an old journalist, is simply this: to write an article for the *Sporting Times* and another for the *Church Times,* and put them into the wrong envelopes."

What he had to say came pouring out in essays, poems, and books. (His first book, called "Robert Browning," had, as he knew, things to say about almost every subject under the sun save the poet. A later book on Dickens, though a little less absent-minded, is really about "The Pickwick Papers" and bits of "Martin Chuzzlewit" and "Nicholas Nickleby.") He wrote an essay nearly every week, perhaps the best and most characteristic of them, "On Running After One's Hat," making the case for the romance of everyday existence:

> Most of the inconveniences that make men swear or women cry are really sentimental or imaginative inconveniences—things altogether of the mind. For instance, we often hear grown-up people complaining of having to hang about a railway station and wait for a train. Did you ever hear a small boy complain of having to hang about a railway station and wait for a train? No; for to him to be inside a railway station is to be inside a cavern of wonder and a palace of poetical pleasures. Because to him the red light and the green light on the signal are like a new sun and a new moon. Because to him when the wooden arm of the signal falls down suddenly, it is as if a great king had thrown down his staff as a signal and started a shrieking tournament of trains. I myself am of little boys' habit in this matter. They also serve who only stand and wait for the two fifteen.

Chesterton's mysticism always resolves in the close at hand: in a signal light at Paddington station, not in a sunrise over a beach in Tahiti. With a comic touch, he goes on to make a serious point, elevating stories over situations:

> A friend of mine was particularly afflicted in this way. Every day his drawer was jammed, and every day in consequence it was something else that rhymes to it. But I pointed out to him that this sense of wrong was really subjective and relative; it rested entirely upon the assumption that the drawer could, should, and would come out easily. "But if," I said, "you picture to yourself that you are pulling against some powerful and oppressive enemy, the struggle will become merely exciting and not exasperating. Imagine that you are tugging up a lifeboat out of the sea. Imagine that you are roping up a fellow-creature out of an Alpine crevass. Imagine even that you are a boy again and engaged in a tug-of-war between French and English.". . . I have no doubt that every day of his life he hangs on to the handle of that drawer with a flushed face and eyes bright with battle, uttering encouraging shouts to himself, and seeming to hear all round him the roar of an applauding ring. . . . An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered.



"I can feel the baby kicking."

Chesterton liked to pair himself, congenially, with Shaw, as his opposite, and he was right to do so, for they were the two most perceptive critics of capitalism in their decade. The chief bourgeois vices are hypocrisy and homogenization. Mercantile capitalist societies profess values that their own appetites destroy; calls for public morality come from the same people who use prostitutes. Meanwhile, the workings of capital turn the local artisan into a maker of mass-produced objects and every high street into an identical strip mall. Shaw is the great critic of the hypocrisy of bourgeois society—its inconsistencies and absurdities, the way it robs the poor and then demands that they be "deserving." Chesterton is the great critic of its homogenization, the levelling of difference in the pursuit of cash. He is the grandfather of Slow Food, of local eating, of real ale, the first strong mind that saw something evil in the levelling of little pleasures.

The idea for Chesterton's first novel, "The Napoleon of Notting Hill," published in 1904, is an illustration of the principle: Chesterton imagines a future London where medieval clan identity has reasserted itself, so that Notting Hill proudly distinguishes itself from Kensington, and the good yeomen of Chelsea guard their traditions against the interlopers from Battersea. The joy of the book lies in the marriage of Chesterton's love of feudal romance with his love of the density and mystery of the modern city. And London does bring out his strongest and most eloquent emotions: "A city is, properly speaking, more poetic even than a countryside, for while nature is a chaos of unconscious forces, a city is a chaos of conscious ones. The crest of the flower or the pattern of the lichen may or may not be significant symbols. But there is no stone in the street and no brick in the wall that is not actually a deliberate symbol—a message from some man, as much as if it were a telegram or a post card." Chesterton's preference for the small state made him a vehement and, for the time, courageous anti-imperialist. His was one of the leading voices against the Boer War. "The two great movements during my youth and early manhood were Imperialism and Socialism," he recalled. "Both believed in unification and centralization

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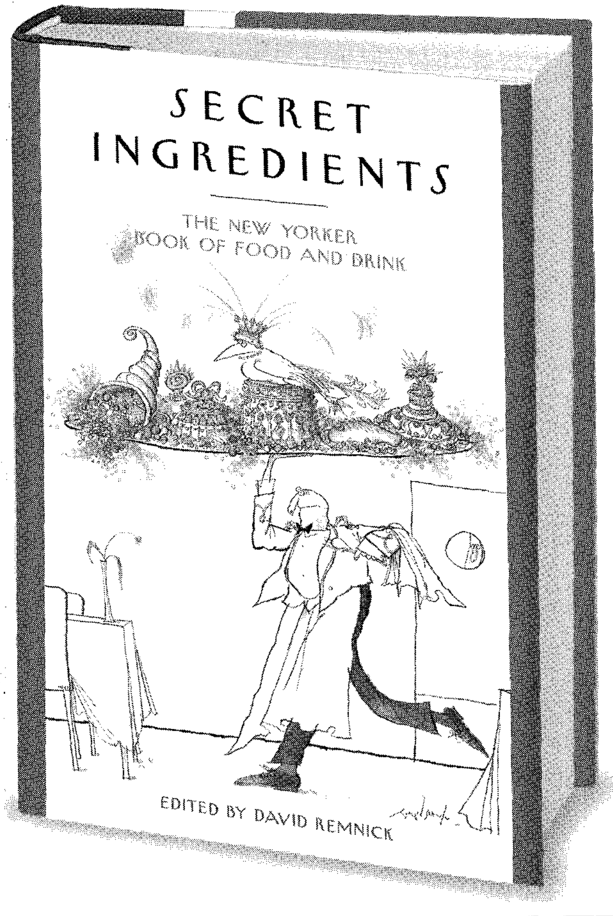

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nother world, that the crack
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ı small epigrammatic mo-
nen Syme comes upon an
et, Gregory, standing by a
(“whose gleam gilded the
tree that bent out over the
e behind him”) on a silent,
it street:

> I was waiting for you,” said
> gory. “Might I have a mo-
> t's conversation?”
> Certainly. About what?” asked
> e in a sort of weak wonder.
> Gregory struck out with his
> at the lamp-post, and then at
> ree.
> About *this* and *this*,” he cried;
> out order and anarchy. There
> ıs order, that lean, iron lamp,
> n; and there is anarchy, rich,
> ıcing itself—there is anarchy,
> en and gold.”
> me,” replied Syme patiently,
> t you only see the tree by the
> np. I wonder when you would
> np by the light of the tree.”

startling thing in the book
ı's imagining of the anar-
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how scary anarchists could
eginning of the twentieth
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esident, and the Russian
bombed the Royal Green-
atory, near London. (The
w—Sarkozy, Bush, Putin,
ndon Eye—and we'd all
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ıring nihilism that is as-
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—profoundly seductive,
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d” post-9/11 liberal: “He
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nce with intellectualism.
hem as a huge and pitiless
inese invasion. He poured
nto newspapers and their
askets a torrent of tales,

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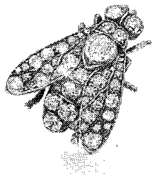

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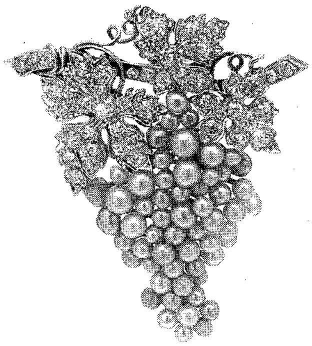

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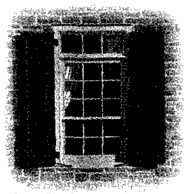

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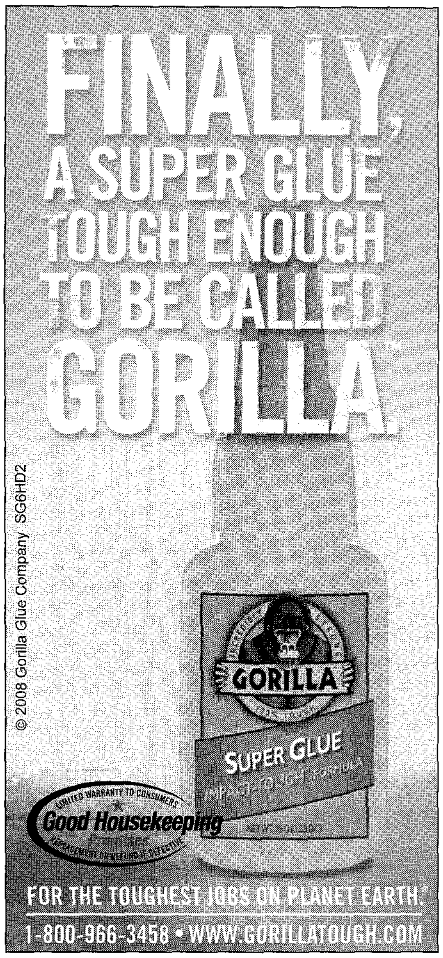
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verses and violent articles, warning men of this deluge of barbaric denial. . . . There was no anarchist with a bomb in his pocket so savage and solitary as he."

Chesterton thinks the anarchist's hatred of bourgeois materialism is so obviously attractive, comes so near to the divine, that it is the truest evil. Only an act of strong will can resist it. Where the ordinary liberal scoffs at the idea that apocalyptic terror represents a real threat to his society, the awakened humanist, like Syme the poet-policeman or Chesterton himself, believes that everyone else has missed the reality, by refusing to accept how plausible and alluring the argument for destruction is. To anyone "awakened" in this way, people who hold the alternative normal view—that there is nothing much to be frightened of—are literally insane. They cannot see what is in front of their noses even as it blows up their cities. The nightmarish intensity of "The Man Who Was Thursday" derives from this conviction. Only cops and criminals are really alive.

Yet Chesterton still had his wits about him, and recognizes, at the end of his book, that the demon-terrorists are largely a projection of the policeman's mind. Or is it, perhaps, that the anarchists, who are really policemen, secretly wish to be anarchists? This double vision, where the appetite for romantic violence is imagined as the flip side of the desire for absolute order, gives the book its permanence. It ends with a powerful and strange image of reality itself as two-sided:

> "Listen to me," cried Syme with extraordinary emphasis. "Shall I tell you the secret of the whole world? It is that we have only known the back of the world. We see everything from behind and it looks brutal. That is not a tree, but the back of a tree. That is not a cloud, but the back of a cloud. Cannot you see that everything is stopping and hiding a face? If we could only get round in front—"

Given that longing, it was as obvious that Chesterton was headed to Rome as it was that Wilde was headed to Reading jail. If you want a solution, at once authoritarian and poetic, to the threat of moral anarchism, then Catholicism, which built Chartres and inspired Dante, looks a lot better than Scotland Yard. If you want stability allied to imagination, Catholicism has everything else beat. Although Chesterton did not officially convert until 1922, well after the war, his drift toward what he called "Orthodoxy" was apparent in the years just after the publication of "The Man Who Was Thursday."

And right around here is where the Jew-hating comes in. A reader with a casual interest in Chesterton's life may have a reassuring sense, from his fans and friendly biographers, that his anti-Semitism really isn't all that bad: that there's not much of it; that a lot of it came from loyalty to his younger brother Cecil, a polemical journalist in the pre-war years, and to his anti-Dreyfusard friend Belloc; that he had flushed it out of his system by the mid-twenties; and, anyway, that it was part of the time he lived in, a time when pretty much everyone, from Kipling to T. S. Eliot, mistrusted Jews—when even the philo-Semites (give them a home!) were really anti-Semites (get them out of here!).

Unfortunately, a little reading shows that there's a lot of it, that it comes all the time, and that the more Chesterton tries to justify it the worse it gets. The ugliness really began in 1912, when he joined his brother in a crusade against the corruption of the Liberal Government, using a scandal that involved Rufus Isaacs, a Cabinet minister, and his brother Godfrey, a businessman. The affair, then called the Marconi Scandal (it had to do with what would now be called insider trading in a wireless-telegraph company), implicated non-Jews, too—David Lloyd George, for one—but the nasty heart of the accusations was directed by the Chestertons against the Isaacs brothers, who were not only corrupt but alien. Eventually, Godfrey Isaacs sued Cecil Chesterton, successfully, for libel.

This campaign—and, perhaps, the courtroom loss as well—set off something horrible in the older brother, and, after Cecil died, in 1918, in the war, Chesterton's hatreds became ugly and obsessive. There had been mild Jew-bashing in his work before, based on the ethnic generalities that everyone engaged in—the Jews are all alike in his stories, but then the French and the Italians are all alike, too. From then on, however, Chesterton hammers relentlessly at the idea that there is "a Jewish problem," the problem being that Jews are foreigners, innately alien to the nations into which they've insinuated themselves. Writing in 1920, he tells us that Jews are regarded, by the Arabs in Palestine, as "parasites that feed on a community by a thousand methods of financial intrigue and economic exploitation." Chesterton then adds that this charge may not be entirely true but needs to be addressed by the Jews—as though they were compelled to consider themselves permanently on trial by their persecutors. Later in the decade, writing about a journey to America, he says, in defense of Henry Ford, "No extravagance of hatred merely following on *experience* of Jews can properly be called a prejudice. . . . These people of the plains have found the Jewish problem exactly as they might have struck oil; because it is *there*, and not even because they were looking for it."

It's a deeply racial, not merely religious, bigotry; it's not the Jews' cupidity or their class role—it's *them*. In his autobiography, Chesterton tries to defend himself by explaining what it is that makes people naturally mistrust Jews. All schoolboys recognized Jews as Jews, he says, and when they did so "what they saw was not Semites or Schismatics or capitalists or revolutionists, but foreigners, only foreigners that were not called foreigners." Even a seemingly assimilated Jew, in Chesterton's world, remains a foreigner. No one born a Jew can become a good Englishman: if England had sunk into the Atlantic, he says, Disraeli would have run off to America. The more he tries to excuse himself, the worse it gets. In his autobiography, he writes of how he appreciates that "one of the great Jewish virtues is gratitude," and explains that he knows this because as a kid at school "I was criticized in early days for quixotry and priggishness in protecting Jews; and I remember once extricating a strange swarthy little creature with a hooked nose from being bullied, or rather being teased."

"I need it yesterday."

The insistence that Chesterton's anti-Semitism needs to be understood "in the context of his time" defines the problem, because his time—from the end of the Great War to the mid-thirties—was the time that led to the extermination of the European Jews. In that context, his jocose stuff is even more sinister than his serious stuff. He claims that he can tolerate Jews in England, but only if they are compelled to wear "Arab" clothing, to show that they are an alien nation. Hitler made a simpler demand for Jewish dress, but the idea was the same. Of course, there were, tragically and ironically, points of contact between Chesterton and Zionism. He went to Jerusalem in 1920 and reported back on what he found among the nascent Zionists, whom he liked: he wanted them out of Europe and so did they; he wanted Jews to be turned from rootless cosmopolitans into rooted yeomen, and so did they.

Chesterton wasn't a fascist, and he certainly wasn't in favor of genocide, but that is about the best that can be said for him—and is surely less of a moral accomplishment than his admirers would like. He did speak out, toward the end of his life, against the persecution in Nazi Germany, writing that he was "appalled by the Hitlerite atrocities," that "they have absolutely no reason or logic behind them," that "I am quite ready to believe now that Belloc and I will die defending the last Jew in Europe." Yet he insisted, "I still think there is a Jewish problem," and he denounced Hitler in the context of a wacky argument that Nazism is really a form of "Prussianism," which is really a form of Judaism; that is, a belief in a chosen, specially exalted people. (For what it's worth, although he mistrusts Judaism, he *detests* Islam; Judaism is merely pre-Christian but Islam is a kind of parody Christianity. All the favorite historical arguments for Jesus—that he had to be either crazy or right, and he doesn't seem crazy; that he changed the world with a suddenness not plausible in an ordinary human; that the scale of the edifice he inspired is proof of divine inspiration—apply just as well to Muhammad, and they can't both be the guy.)

The trouble for those of us who love Chesterton's writing is that the anti-Semitism is not incidental: it rises from the logic of his poetic position. The anti-Semitism is easy to excise from his arguments when it's explicit. It's harder to excise the spirit that leads to it—the suspicion of the alien, the extreme localism, the favoring of national instinct over rational argument, the distaste for "parasitic" middlemen, and the preference for the simple organ-grinding music of the folk.

His defenders insist that, whatever harm he did to himself and his reputation by his prejudices, the often long, always didactic, and specifically Catholic books to which he devoted himself after his conversion more than make up for it, since they are both profound and genuinely universal, insisting on a pan-national commonality in the true faith. I have had these books—"The Everlasting Man," a study of Jesus and Christianity; his life of St. Francis; his defense of Thomas Aquinas—pressed on me by Catholic friends with something like the same enthusiasm with which I have proselytized for the pre-Catholic Chesterton. It is hard for a nonbeliever to evaluate this kind of writing, which, despite its evangelical exhortations, is really written to comfort and encourage the already convinced. We choose a religion, when we do, not for the tenets of a creed but for the totality of a circumstance, for a tone and a practice and an encompassing condition: "It feels like home" (or "like my father's puppet theatre") is about the truest thing that the convert can say about his new faith. As Chesterton would have been the first to admit, nobody has to argue so strenuously for what he actually believes. Nobody gets up on a soapbox and shouts about the comfort of his sofa and chairs. He just invites other people to sit in them.

In these books, Chesterton becomes a Pangloss of the parish; anything Roman is right. It is hard to credit that even a convinced Catholic can feel equally strongly about St. Francis's intuitive mysticism and St. Thomas's pedantic religiosity, as Chesterton seems to. His writing suffers from conversion sickness. Converts tend to see the faith they were raised in as an exasperatingly makeshift and jury-rigged system: Anglican converts to Catholicism are relieved not to have to defend Henry VIII's divorces; Jewish converts to Christianity are relieved to get out from under the weight of all those strange Levitical laws on animal hooves. The newly adopted faith, they imagine, is a shining, perfectly balanced system, an intricately worked clock where the cosmos turns to tell the time and the cuckoo comes out singing every Sunday. An outsider sees the Church as a dreamy compound of incense and impossibility, and, overglamorizing its pretensions, underrates its adaptability. A Frenchman or an Italian, even a devout one, can see the Catholic Church as a normally bureaucratic human institution, the way patriotic Americans see the post office, recognizing the frailty and even the occasional psychosis of its employees without doubting its necessity or its ability to deliver the message. Chesterton writing about the Church is like someone who has just made his first trip to the post office. Look, it delivers letters for the tiny price of a stamp! You write an address on a label, and they will send it anywhere, literally anywhere you like, across a continent and an ocean, in any weather! The fact that the post office attracts time-servers, or has produced an occasional gun massacre, is only proof of the mystical enthusiasm that the post office alone provides! Glorifying the postman beyond what the postman can bear is what you do only if you're new to mail.

The books became narrower as they got bigger. The problem of how you reconcile a love of the particular with a set of universal values seemed easy; the Catholic Church was large enough to provide a universal code and ritual for life with plenty of room for variation among lives within it. The trouble is that Catholic universalism is not so convincing to those whose idea of local variation involves a variation on the Catholic ritual, or wanting some other ritual, or wanting no ritual at all. Chesterton's vision has no room in it for tolerance, except as a likable personal whim or an idiosyncratic national trait. (That he was personally tolerant, on this basis, no one can doubt.) The history of persecution, of Albigensians and Inquisitions, is constantly defended in the inevitable "though it can only be regretted/still it must always be remembered" manner.

The wonderful spirit of early Chesterton—who is equally religious but not so neatly dogmatic—got channelled into the Father Brown detective stories, which he wrote for money and from increasingly flagging inspiration, and into the torrent of weekly journalism, which he kept up right until his death. The later essays are often as brilliant as those of the early nineteen-hundreds. Chesterton on the virtues of the newly invented cartoon, on the absurdities of Prohibition in America, on social manners within New York skyscrapers is still wonderful. (Musing on how an American always takes off his hat in an elevator, he writes that the very word "elevator" "expresses a great deal of his vague but idealistic religion," and he goes on, "Perhaps a brief religious service will be held in the elevator as it ascends; in a few well-chosen words touching the Utmost for the Highest. . . . The tall building is itself artistically akin to the tall story. The very word skyscraper is an admirable example of an American lie.") But often one has the sense of a man chained to a paradox assembly line in a prose factory. Too much journalism does drain a writer; turns his tics into tocks, dully marking the time until the next check.

And then he seemed very dated very soon. There are two great tectonic shifts in English writing. One occurs in the early eighteenth century, when Addison and Steele begin *The Spectator* and the stop-and-start Elizabethan-Stuart prose becomes the smooth, Latinate, elegantly wrought ironic style that dominated English writing for two centuries. Gibbon made it sly and ornate; Johnson gave it sinew and muscle; Dickens mocked it at elaborate comic length. But the style—formal address, long windups, balance sought for and achieved—was still a sort of default, the voice in which leader pages more or less wrote themselves.

The second big shift occurred just after the First World War, when, under American and Irish pressure, and thanks to the French (Flaubert doing his work through early Joyce and Hemingway), a new form of aerodynamic prose came into being. The new style could be as limpid as Waugh or as blunt as Orwell or as funny as White and Benchley, but it dethroned the old orotundity as surely as Addison had killed off the old asymmetry. Chestertonian mannerisms—beginning sentences with "I wish to conclude" or "I should say, therefore" or "Moreover," using the first person plural unself-consciously ("What we have to ask ourselves . . ."), making sure that every sentence was crafted like a sword and loaded like a cannon—appeared to have come from some other universe. Writers like Shaw and Chesterton depended on a kind of comic and complicit hyperbole: every statement is an overstatement, and understood as such by readers. The new style prized understatement, to be filled in by the reader. What had seemed charming and obviously theatrical twenty years before now could sound like puff and noise. Human nature didn't change in 1910, but English writing did. (For Virginia Woolf, they were the same thing.) The few writers of the nineties who were still writing a couple of decades later were as dazed as the last dinosaurs, post-comet. They didn't know what had hit them, and went on roaring anyway.

In the late twenties, many people lost their bearings, and Chesterton began to drift farther right than he had before. Though he never fully embraced Mussolini, he was in spirit as good a Falangist as you could find: he dreamed of an anti-capitalist agricultural state overseen by the Catholic Church and governed by a military for whom medieval ideas of honor still resonated, a place where Jews would not be persecuted or killed, certainly, but hived off and always marked as foreigners. All anti-utopians cherish a secret utopia, an Eden of their own, and his, ironically, was achieved: his ideal order was ascendant over the whole Iberian Peninsula for half a century. And a bleak place it was, too, with a fearful ruling class running a frightened population in an atmosphere of poverty-stricken uniformity and terrified stasis—a lot more like the actual medieval condition than like the Victorian fantasy. (Just as William Morris's or Ruskin's medieval guilds were the leisure activities of a Victorian moneyed and altruistic class projected backward in time, Chesterton's medieval London was really a nostalgic vision of late-Victorian London suburbs, small craftsmen gathered around the village green.)

He died, at the age of sixty-two, in his beloved country town of Beaconsfield (Disraeli had previously been its most illustrious resident), worse for wear after decades of non-stop writing, editing, and lecture-touring. His coffin was too big to be carried down the stairs, and had to be taken through a window. But even in his final years the sinuosity of his mind and the beauty of his line remained strong. (Besides, if obviously great writers were allowed onto the reading list only when they conform to the current consensus of liberal good will—voices of tolerance and liberal democracy—we would probably be down to George Eliot.)

Chesterton's conundrums of imagination and fact retain their grip on us, because they remind us that we know two things. We know that we have our experience of a limited world, Surbiton or Notting Hill or Telegraph Hill. We also know that this experience doesn't *feel* limited, that it includes far more—all of myth and religion and meaning, as the children's puppet theatre does. The desire for mystery and romance can't be argued out of importance, but it can't be willed into existence, either. It is a mistake to believe that the man with the golden key is "only" a puppet when he acts out a story that alters the inside of your head; it is also a mistake to cover your eyes and wish away the strings.

We can take the belief in that puppet to be a delusion, as the rationalists did. Or we can take it to be an intimation, as Chesterton did, of the existence of another world, in which the things that we sense as shadows will become real, and we will see ourselves as puppets that have come alive in the hand of God. Or we can believe that the credit we give the puppet show is the credit it deserves, that the wonder of it cannot be explained, up or down, but only experienced; that the side we see is the side there is to look at, and that the white radiance of wonder shines from inside, which is where the light is. ♦

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ANNALS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

PREPARING THE BATTLEFIELD

The Bush Administration steps up its secret moves against Iran.

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

Late last year, Congress agreed to a request from President Bush to fund a major escalation of covert operations against Iran, according to current and former military, intelligence, and congressional sources. These operations, for which the President sought up to four hundred million dollars, were described in a Presidential Finding signed by Bush, and are designed to destabilize the country's religious leadership. The covert activities involve support of the minority Ahwazi Arab and Baluchi groups and other dissident organizations. They also include gathering intelligence about Iran's suspected nuclear-weapons program.

Clandestine operations against Iran are not new. United States Special Operations Forces have been conducting cross-border operations from southern Iraq, with Presidential authorization, since last year. These have included seizing members of Al Quds, the commando arm of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, and taking them to Iraq for interrogation, and the pursuit of "high-value targets" in the President's war on terror, who may be captured or killed. But the scale and the scope of the operations in Iran, which involve the Central Intelligence Agency and the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), have now been significantly expanded, according to the current and former officials. Many of these activities are not specified in the new Finding, and some congressional leaders have had serious questions about their nature.

Under federal law, a Presidential Finding, which is highly classified, must be issued when a covert intelligence operation gets under way and, at a minimum, must be made known to Democratic and Republican leaders in the House and the Senate and to the ranking members of their respective intelligence committees—the so-called Gang of Eight. Money for the operation can then be reprogrammed from previous appropriations, as needed, by the relevant congressional committees, which also can be briefed.

"The Finding was focussed on undermining Iran's nuclear ambitions and trying to undermine the government through regime change," a person familiar with its contents said, and involved "working with opposition groups and passing money." The Finding provided for a whole new range of activities in southern Iran and in the areas, in the east, where Baluchi political opposition is strong, he said.

Although some legislators were troubled by aspects of the Finding, and "there was a significant amount of high-level discussion" about it, according to the source familiar with it, the funding for the escalation was approved. In other words, some members of the Democratic leadership—Congress has been under Democratic control since the 2006 elections—were willing, in secret, to go along with the Administration in expanding covert activities directed at Iran, while the Party's presumptive candidate for President, Barack Obama, has said that he favors direct talks and diplomacy.

The request for funding came in the same period in which the Administration was coming to terms with a National Intelligence Estimate, released in December, that concluded that Iran had halted its work on nuclear weapons in 2003. The Administration downplayed the significance of the N.I.E., and, while saying that it was committed to diplomacy, continued to emphasize that urgent action was essential to counter the Iranian nuclear threat. President Bush questioned the N.I.E.'s conclusions, and senior national-security officials, including Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, made similar statements. (So did Senator John McCain, the presumptive Republican Presidential nominee.)

Meanwhile, the Administration also revived charges that the Iranian leadership has been involved in the killing of American soldiers in Iraq: both directly, by dispatching commando units into Iraq, and indirectly, by supplying materials used for roadside bombs and other lethal goods. (There have been questions about the accuracy of the claims; the *Times*, among others, has reported that "significant uncertainties remain about the extent of that involvement.")

Military and civilian leaders in the Pentagon share the White House's concern about Iran's nuclear ambitions, but there is disagreement about whether a military strike is the right solution. Some Pentagon officials believe, as they have let Congress and the media know, that bombing Iran is not a viable response to the nuclear-proliferation issue, and that more diplomacy is necessary.

A Democratic senator told me that, late last year, in an off-the-record lunch meeting, Secretary of Defense Gates met with the Democratic caucus in the Senate. (Such meetings are held regularly.) Gates warned of the consequences if the Bush Administration staged a preëmptive strike on Iran, saying, as the senator recalled, "We'll create generations of jihadists, and our grandchildren will be battling our enemies here in America." Gates's comments stunned the Democrats at the lunch, and another senator asked whether Gates was speaking for Bush and Vice-President Dick Cheney. Gates's answer, the senator told me, was "Let's just say that I'm here speaking for myself." (A spokesman for Gates confirmed that he discussed the consequences of a strike at the meeting, but would not address what he said, other than to dispute the senator's characterization.)

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, whose chairman is Admiral Mike Mullen, were "push-

Operations outside the knowledge and control of commanders have eroded "the coherence of military strategy," one general says.

ing back very hard" against White House pressure to undertake a military strike against Iran, the person familiar with the Finding told me. Similarly, a Pentagon consultant who is involved in the war on terror said that "at least ten senior flag and general officers, including combatant commanders"—the four-star officers who direct military operations around the world—"have weighed in on that issue."

The most outspoken of those officers is Admiral William Fallon, who until recently was the head of U.S. Central Command, and thus in charge of American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. In March, Fallon resigned under pressure, after giving a series of interviews stating his reservations about an armed attack on Iran. For example, late last year he told the *Financial Times* that the "real objective" of U.S. policy was to change the Iranians' behavior, and that "attacking them as a means to get to that spot strikes me as being not the first choice."

Admiral Fallon acknowledged, when I spoke to him in June, that he had heard that there were people in the White House who were upset by his public statements. "Too many people believe you have to be either for or against the Iranians," he told me. "Let's get serious. Eighty million people live there, and everyone's an individual. The idea that they're only one way or another is nonsense."

When it came to the Iraq war, Fallon said, "Did I bitch about some of the things that were being proposed? You bet. Some of them were very stupid."

The Democratic leadership's agreement to commit hundreds of millions of dollars for more secret operations in Iran was remarkable, given the general concerns of officials like Gates, Fallon, and many others. "The oversight process has not kept pace—it's been coöpted" by the Administration, the person familiar with the contents of the Finding said. "The process is broken, and this is dangerous stuff we're authorizing."

Senior Democrats in Congress told me that they had concerns about the possibility that their understanding of what the new operations entail differs from the White House's. One issue has to do with a reference in the Finding, the person familiar with it recalled, to potential defensive lethal action by U.S. operatives in Iran. (In early May, the journalist Andrew Cockburn published elements of the Finding in *Counterpunch*, a newsletter and online magazine.)

The language was inserted into the Finding at the urging of the C.I.A., a former senior intelligence official said. The covert operations set forth in the Finding essentially run parallel to those of a secret military task force, now operating in Iran, that is under the control of JSOC. Under the Bush Administration's interpretation of the law, clandestine military activities, unlike covert C.I.A. operations, do not need to be depicted in a Finding, because the President has a constitutional right to command combat forces in the field without congressional interference. But the borders between operations are not always clear: in Iran, C.I.A. agents and regional assets have the language skills and the local knowledge to make contacts for the JSOC operatives, and have been working with them to direct personnel, matériel, and money into Iran from an obscure base in western Afghanistan. As a result, Congress has been given only a partial view of how the money it authorized may be used. One of JSOC's task-force missions, the pursuit of "high-value targets," was not directly addressed in the Finding. There is a growing realization among some legislators that the Bush Administration, in recent years, has conflated what is an intelligence operation and what is a military one in order to avoid fully informing Congress about what it is doing.

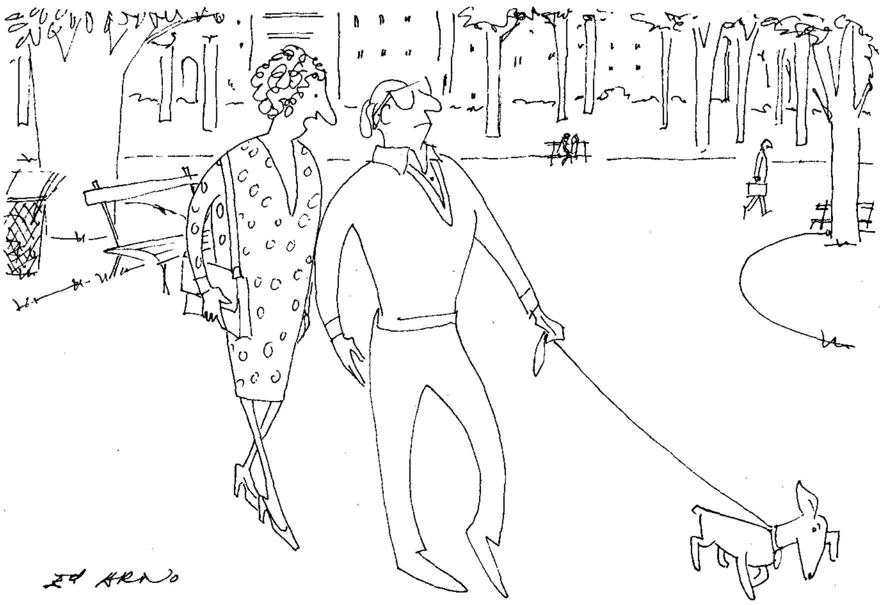
"This is a big deal," the person familiar with the Finding said. "The C.I.A. needed the Finding to do its traditional stuff, but the Finding does not apply to JSOC. The President signed an Executive Order after September 11th giving the Pentagon license to do things that it had never been able to do before without notifying Congress. The claim was that the military was 'preparing the battle space,' and by using that term they were able to circumvent congressional oversight. Everything is justified in terms of fighting the global war on terror." He added, "The Administration has been fuzzing the lines; there used to be a shade of gray"—between operations that had to be briefed to the senior congressional leadership and those which did not—"but now it's a shade of mush."

"The agency says we're not going to get in the position of helping to kill people without a Finding," the former senior intelligence official told me. He was referring to the legal threat confronting some agency operatives for their involvement in the rendition and alleged torture of suspects in the war on terror. "This drove the military people up the wall," he said. As far as the C.I.A. was concerned, the former senior intelligence official said, "the over-all authorization includes killing, but it's not as though that's what they're setting out to do. It's about gathering information, enlisting support." The Finding sent to Congress was a compromise, providing legal cover for the C.I.A. while referring to the use of lethal force in ambiguous terms.

The defensive-lethal language led some Democrats, according to congressional sources familiar with their views, to call in the director of the C.I.A., Air Force General Michael V. Hayden, for a special briefing. Hayden reassured the legislators that the language did nothing more than provide authority for Special Forces operatives on the ground in Iran to shoot their way out if they faced capture or harm.

The legislators were far from convinced. One congressman subsequently wrote a personal letter to President Bush insisting that "no lethal action, period" had been authorized within Iran's borders. As of June, he had received no answer.

Members of Congress have expressed skepticism in the past about the information provided by the White House. On March 15, 2005, David Obey, then the ranking Democrat on the Republican-led House Appropriations Committee, announced that he was putting aside an amendment that he had intended to offer that day, and that would have cut off all funding for national-intelligence programs unless the President agreed to keep Congress fully informed about clandestine military activities undertaken in the war on terror. He had changed his mind, he said, because the White House promised better coöperation. "The Executive Branch understands that we are not trying to dictate what they do," he said in a floor speech at the time. "We are simply trying to see to it that what they do is consistent with American values and will not get the country in trouble."



"I'm sick of the economy, dear. Can't we disagree about something else?"

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Obey declined to comment on the specifics of the operations in Iran, but he did tell me that the White House reneged on its promise to consult more fully with Congress. He said, "I suspect there's something going on, but I don't know what to believe. Cheney has always wanted to go after Iran, and if he had more time he'd find a way to do it. We still don't get enough information from the agencies, and I have very little confidence that they give us information on the edge."

None of the four Democrats in the Gang of Eight—Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Intelligence Committee chairman John D. Rockefeller IV, and House Intelligence Committee chairman Silvestre Reyes—would comment on the Finding, with some noting that it was highly classified. An aide to one member of the Democratic leadership responded, on his behalf, by pointing to the limitations of the Gang of Eight process. The notification of a Finding, the aide said, "is just that—notification, and not a sign-off on activities. Proper oversight of ongoing intelligence activities is done by fully briefing the members of the intelligence committee." However, Congress does have the means to challenge the White House once it has been sent a Finding. It has the power to withhold funding for any government operation. The members of the House and Senate Democratic leadership who have access to the Finding can also, if they choose to do so, and if they have shared concerns, come up with ways to exert their influence on Administration policy. (A spokesman for the C.I.A. said, "As a rule, we don't comment one way or the other on allegations of covert activities or purported findings." The White House also declined to comment.)

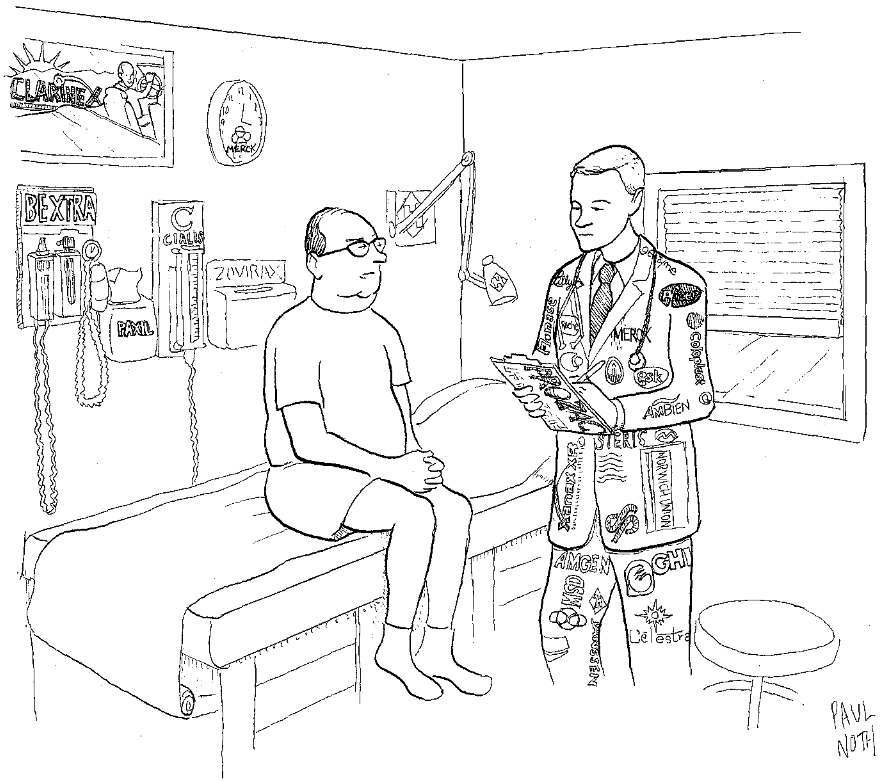
A member of the House Appropriations Committee acknowledged that, even with a Democratic victory in November, "it will take another year before we get the intelligence activities under control." He went on, "We control the money and they can't do anything without the money. Money is what it's all about. But I'm very leery of this Administration." He added, "This Administration has been so secretive."

One irony of Admiral Fallon's departure is that he was, in many areas, in agreement with President Bush on the threat posed by Iran. They had a good working relationship, Fallon told me, and, when he ran CENTCOM, were in regular communication. On March 4th, a week before his resignation, Fallon testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee, saying that he was "encouraged" about the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Regarding the role played by Iran's leaders, he said, "They've been absolutely unhelpful, very damaging, and I absolutely don't condone any of their activities. And I have yet to see anything since I've been in this job in the way of a public action by Iran that's been at all helpful in this region."

Fallon made it clear in our conversations that he considered it inappropriate to comment publicly about the President, the Vice-President, or Special Operations. But he said he had heard that people in the White House had been "struggling" with his views on Iran. "When I arrived at CENTCOM, the Iranians were funding every entity inside Iraq. It was in their interest to get us out, and so they decided to kill as many Americans as they could. And why not? They didn't know who'd come out ahead, but they wanted us out. I decided that I couldn't resolve the situation in Iraq without the neighborhood. To get this problem in Iraq solved, we had to somehow involve Iran and Syria. I had to work the neighborhood."

Fallon told me that his focus had been not on the Iranian nuclear issue, or on regime change there, but on "putting out the fires in Iraq." There were constant discussions in Washington and in the field about how to engage Iran and, on the subject of the bombing option, Fallon said, he believed that "it would happen only if the Iranians did something stupid."

Fallon's early retirement, however, appears to have been provoked not only by his negative comments about bombing Iran but also by his strong belief in the chain of command and his insistence on being informed about Special Operations in his area of responsibility. One of Fallon's defenders is retired Marine General John J. (Jack) Sheehan, whose last assignment was as commander-in-chief of the U.S. Atlantic Command, where Fallon was a deputy. Last year, Sheehan rejected a White House offer to become the President's "czar" for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "One of the reasons the White House selected Fallon for CENTCOM was that he's known to be a strategic thinker and had demonstrated those skills in the Pacific," Sheehan told me. (Fallon served as commander-in-chief of U.S. forces in the Pacific from 2005 to 2007.) "He was charged with coming up with an over-all coherent strategy for Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and, by law, the combatant commander is responsible for all military operations within his A.O."—area of operations. "That was not happen-



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ing," Sheehan said. "When Fallon tried to make sense of all the overt and covert activity conducted by the military in his area of responsibility, a small group in the White House leadership shut him out."

The law cited by Sheehan is the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act, known as Goldwater-Nichols, which defined the chain of command: from the President to the Secretary of Defense, through the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and on to the various combatant commanders, who were put in charge of all aspects of military operations, including joint training and logistics. That authority, the act stated, was not to be shared with other echelons of command. But the Bush Administration, as part of its global war on terror, instituted new policies that undercut regional commanders-in-chief; for example, it gave Special Operations teams, at military commands around the world, the highest priority in terms of securing support and equipment. The degradation of the traditional chain of command in the past few years has been a point of tension between the White House and the uniformed military.

"The coherence of military strategy is being eroded because of undue civilian influence and direction of nonconventional military operations," Sheehan said. "If you have small groups planning and conducting military operations outside the knowledge and control of the combatant commander, by default you can't have a coherent military strategy. You end up with a disaster, like the reconstruction efforts in Iraq."

Admiral Fallon, who is known as Fox, was aware that he would face special difficulties as the first Navy officer to lead CENTCOM, which had always been headed by a ground commander, one of his military colleagues told me. He was also aware that the Special Operations community would be a concern. "Fox said that there's a lot of strange stuff going on in Special Ops, and I told him he had to figure out what they were really doing," Fallon's colleague said. "The Special Ops guys eventually figured out they needed Fox, and so they began to talk to him. Fox would have won his fight with Special Ops but for Cheney."

The Pentagon consultant said, "Fallon went down because, in his own way, he was trying to prevent a war with Iran, and you have to admire him for that."

In recent months, according to the Iranian media, there has been a surge in violence in Iran; it is impossible at this early stage, however, to credit JSOC or C.I.A. activities, or to assess their impact on the Iranian leadership. The Iranian press reports are being carefully monitored by retired Air Force Colonel Sam Gardiner, who has taught strategy at the National War College and now conducts war games centered on Iran for the federal government, think tanks, and universities. The Iranian press "is very open in describing the killings going on inside the country," Gardiner said. It is, he said, "a controlled press, which makes it more important that it publishes these things. We begin to see inside the government." He added, "Hardly a day goes by now we don't see a clash somewhere. There were three or four incidents over a recent weekend, and the Iranians are even naming the Revolutionary Guard officers who have been killed."

Earlier this year, a militant Ahwazi group claimed to have assassinated a Revolutionary Guard colonel, and the Iranian government acknowledged that an explosion in a cultural center in Shiraz, in the southern part of the country, which killed at least twelve people and injured more than two hundred, had been a terrorist act and not, as it earlier insisted, an accident. It could not be learned whether there has been American involvement in any specific incident in Iran, but, according to Gardiner, the Iranians have begun publicly blaming the U.S., Great Britain, and, more recently, the C.I.A. for some incidents. The agency was involved in a coup in Iran in 1953, and its support for the unpopular regime of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi—who was overthrown in 1979—was condemned for years by the ruling mullahs in Tehran, to great effect. "This is the ultimate for the Iranians—to blame the C.I.A.," Gardiner said. "This is new, and it's an escalation—a ratcheting up of tensions. It rallies support for the regime and shows the people that there is a continuing threat from the 'Great Satan.'" In Gardiner's view, the violence, rather than weakening Iran's religious government, may generate support for it.

Many of the activities may be being carried out by dissidents in Iran, and not by Americans in the field. One problem with "passing money" (to use the term of the person familiar with the Finding) in a covert setting is that it is hard to control where the money goes and whom it benefits. Nonetheless, the former senior intelligence official said, "We've got exposure, because of the transfer of our weapons and our communications gear. The Iranians will be able to make the argument that the opposition was inspired by the Americans. How many times have we tried this without asking the right questions? Is the risk worth it?" One possible consequence of these operations would be a violent Iranian crackdown on one of the dissident groups, which could give the Bush Administration a reason to intervene.

A strategy of using ethnic minorities to undermine Iran is flawed, according to Vali Nasr, who teaches international politics at Tufts University and is also a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "Just because Lebanon, Iraq, and Pakistan have ethnic problems, it does not mean that Iran is suffering from the same issue," Nasr told me. "Iran is an old country—like France and Germany—and its citizens are just as nationalistic. The U.S. is overestimating ethnic tension in Iran." The minority groups that the U.S. is reaching out to are either well integrated or small and marginal, without much influence on the government or much ability to present a political challenge, Nasr said. "You can always find some activist groups that will go and kill a policeman, but working with the minorities will backfire, and alienate the majority of the population."

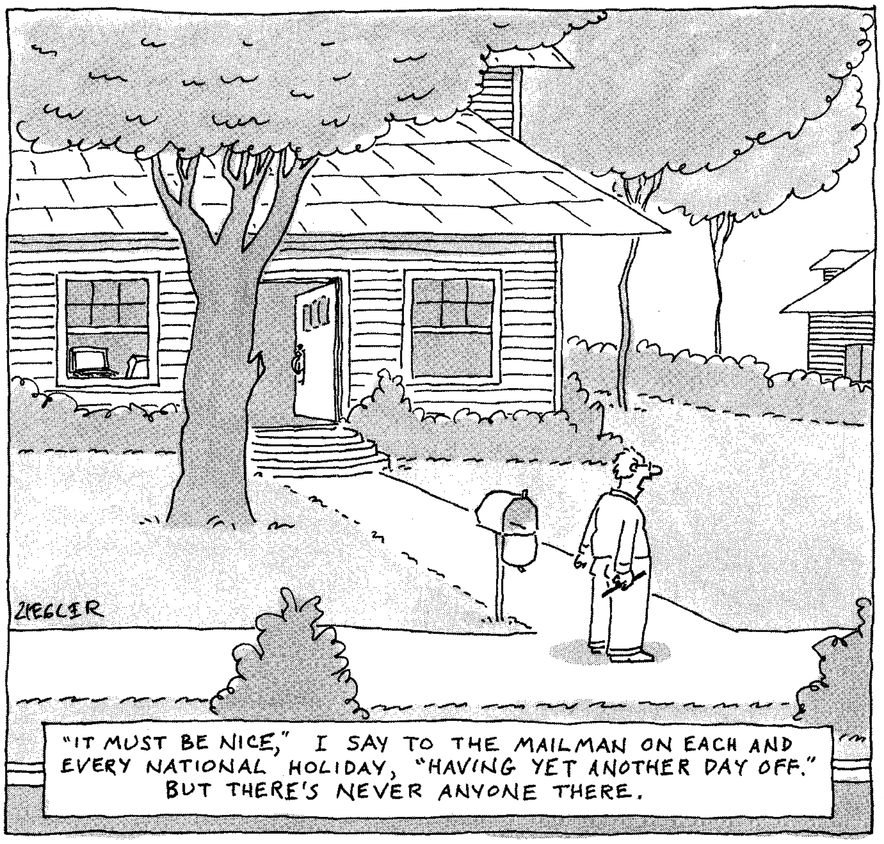
The Administration may have been willing to rely on dissident organizations in Iran even when there was reason to believe that the groups had operated against American interests in the past. The use of Baluchi elements, for example, is problematic, Robert Baer, a former C.I.A. clandestine officer who worked for nearly two decades in South Asia and the Middle East, told me. "The Baluchis are Sunni fundamentalists who hate the regime in Tehran, but you can also describe them as Al Qaeda," Baer told me. "These are guys who cut off the heads of nonbelievers—in this case, it's Shiite Iranians. The irony is that we're once again working with Sunni fundamentalists, just as we did in Afghanistan in the nineteen-eighties." Ramzi Yousef, who was convicted for his role in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who is considered one of the leading planners of the September 11th attacks, are Baluchi Sunni fundamentalists.

One of the most active and violent anti-regime groups in Iran today is the Jundallah, also known as the Iranian People's Resistance Movement, which describes itself as a resistance force fighting for the rights of Sunnis in Iran. "This is a vicious Salafi organization whose followers attended the same madrassas as the Taliban and Pakistani extremists," Nasr told me. "They are suspected of having links to Al Qaeda and they are also thought to be tied to the drug culture." The Jundallah took responsibility for the bombing of a busload of Revolutionary Guard soldiers in February, 2007. At least eleven Guard members were killed. According to Baer and to press reports, the Jundallah is among the groups in Iran that are benefitting from U.S. support.

The C.I.A. and Special Operations communities also have long-standing ties to two other dissident groups in Iran: the Mujahideen-e-Khalq, known in the West as the M.E.K., and a Kurdish separatist group, the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan, or PJAK.

The M.E.K. has been on the State Department's terrorist list for more than a decade, yet in recent years the group has received arms and intelligence, directly or indirectly, from the United States. Some of the newly authorized covert funds, the Pentagon consultant told me, may well end up in M.E.K. coffers. "The new task force will work with the M.E.K. The Administration is desperate for results." He added, "The M.E.K. has no C.P.A. auditing the books, and its leaders are thought to have been lining their pockets for years. If people only knew what the M.E.K. is getting, and how much is going to its bank accounts—and yet it is almost useless for the purposes the Administration intends."

The Kurdish party, PJAK, which has also been reported to be covertly supported by the United States, has been operating against Iran from bases in northern Iraq for at least three years. (Iran, like Iraq and Turkey, has a Kurdish minority, and PJAK and other groups have sought self-rule in territory that is now part of each of those countries.) In recent weeks, according to Sam Gardiner, the military strategist, there has



"IT MUST BE NICE," I SAY TO THE MAILMAN ON EACH AND EVERY NATIONAL HOLIDAY, "HAVING YET ANOTHER DAY OFF." BUT THERE'S NEVER ANYONE THERE.

been a marked increase in the number of PJAK armed engagements with Iranians and terrorist attacks on Iranian targets. In early June, the news agency Fars reported that a dozen PJAK members and four Iranian border guards were killed in a clash near the Iraq border; a similar attack in May killed three Revolutionary Guards and nine PJAK fighters. PJAK has also subjected Turkey, a member of NATO, to repeated terrorist attacks, and reports of American support for the group have been a source of friction between the two governments.

Gardiner also mentioned a trip that the Iraqi Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, made to Tehran in June. After his return, Maliki announced that his government would ban any contact between foreigners and the M.E.K.—a slap at the U.S.'s dealings with the group. Maliki declared that Iraq was not willing to be a staging ground for covert operations against other countries. This was a sign, Gardiner said, of "Maliki's increasingly choosing the interests of Iraq over the interests of the United States." In terms of U.S. allegations of Iranian involvement in the killing of American soldiers, he said, "Maliki was unwilling to play the blame-Iran game." Gardiner added that Pakistan had just agreed to turn over a Jundallah leader to the Iranian government. America's covert operations, he said, "seem to be harming relations with the governments of both Iraq and Pakistan and could well be strengthening the connection between Tehran and Baghdad."

The White House's reliance on questionable operatives, and on plans involving possible lethal action inside Iran, has created anger as well as anxiety within the Special Operations and intelligence communities. JSOC's operations in Iran are believed to be modelled on a program that has, with some success, used surrogates to target the Taliban leadership in the tribal territories of Waziristan, along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. But the situations in Waziristan and Iran are not comparable.

In Waziristan, "the program works because it's small and smart guys are running it," the former senior intelligence official told me. "It's being executed by professionals. The N.S.A., the C.I.A., and the D.I.A."—the Defense Intelligence Agency—"are right in there with the Special Forces and Pakistani intelligence, and they're dealing with serious bad guys." He added, "We have to be really careful in calling in the missiles. We have to hit certain houses at certain times. The people on the ground are watching through binoculars a few hundred yards away and calling specific locations, in latitude and longitude. We keep the Predator loitering until the targets go into a house, and we have to make sure our guys are far enough away so they don't get hit." One of the most prominent victims of the program, the former official said, was Abu Laith al-Libi, a senior Taliban commander, who was killed on January 31st, reportedly in a missile strike that also killed eleven other people.

A dispatch published on March 26th by the Washington *Post* reported on the increasing number of successful strikes against Taliban and other insurgent units in Pakistan's tribal areas. A follow-up article noted that, in response, the Taliban had killed "dozens of people" suspected of providing information to the United States and its allies on the whereabouts of Taliban leaders. Many of the victims were thought to be American spies, and their executions—a beheading, in one case—were videotaped and distributed by DVD as a warning to others.

It is not simple to replicate the program in Iran. "Everybody's arguing about the high-value-target list," the former senior intelligence official said. "The Special Ops guys are pissed off because Cheney's office set up priorities for categories of targets, and now he's getting impatient and applying pressure for results. But it takes a long time to get the right guys in place."

The Pentagon consultant told me, "We've had wonderful results in the Horn of Africa with the use of surrogates and false flags—basic counter-intelligence and counter-insurgency tactics. And we're beginning to tie them in knots in Afghanistan. But the White House is going to kill the program if they use it to go after Iran. It's one thing to engage in selective strikes and assassinations in Waziristan and another in Iran. The White House believes that one size fits all, but the legal issues surrounding extrajudicial killings in Waziristan are less of a problem because Al Qaeda and the Taliban cross the border into Afghanistan and back again, often with U.S. and NATO forces in hot pursuit. The situation is not nearly as clear in the Iranian case. All the considerations—judicial, strategic, and political—are different in Iran."

He added, "There is huge opposition inside the intelligence community to the idea of waging a covert war inside Iran, and using Baluchis and Ahwazis as surrogates. The leaders of our Special Operations community all have remarkable physical courage, but they are less likely to voice their opposition to policy. Iran is not Waziristan."

A Gallup poll taken last November, before the N.I.E. was made public, found that seventy-three per cent of those surveyed thought that the United States should use economic action and diplomacy to stop Iran's nuclear program, while only eighteen per cent favored direct military action. Republicans were twice as likely as Democrats to endorse a military strike. Weariness with the war in Iraq has undoubtedly affected the public's tolerance for an attack on Iran. This mood could change quickly, however. The potential for escalation became clear in early January, when five Iranian patrol boats, believed to be under the command of the Revolutionary Guard, made a series of aggressive moves toward three Navy warships sailing through the Strait of Hormuz. Initial reports of the incident made public by the Pentagon press office said that the Iranians had transmitted threats, over ship-to-ship radio, to "explode" the American ships. At a White House news conference, the President, on the day he left for an eight-day trip to the Middle East, called the incident "provocative" and "dangerous," and there was, very briefly, a sense of crisis and of outrage at Iran. "TWO MINUTES FROM WAR" was the headline in one British newspaper.

The crisis was quickly defused by Vice-Admiral Kevin Cosgriff, the commander of U.S. naval forces in the region. No warning shots were fired, the Admiral told the Pentagon press corps on January 7th, via teleconference from his head-

AFTER LOVE

He is watching the music with his eyes closed.
Hearing the piano like a man moving
through the woods thinking by feeling.
The orchestra up in the trees, the heart below,
step by step. The music hurrying sometimes,
but always returning to quiet, like the man
remembering and hoping. It is a thing in us,
mostly unnoticed. There is somehow a pleasure
in the loss. In the yearning. The pain
going this way and that. Never again.
Never bodied again. Again the never.
Slowly. No undergrowth. Almost leaving.
A humming beauty in the silence.
The having been. Having had. And the man
knowing all of him will come to the end.

—*Jack Gilbert*

quarters, in Bahrain. "Yes, it's more serious than we have seen, but, to put it in context, we do interact with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and their Navy regularly," Cosgriff said. "I didn't get the sense from the reports I was receiving that there was a sense of being afraid of these five boats."

Admiral Cosgriff's caution was well founded: within a week, the Pentagon acknowledged that it could not positively identify the Iranian boats as the source of the ominous radio transmission, and press reports suggested that it had instead come from a prankster long known for sending fake messages in the region. Nonetheless, Cosgriff's demeanor angered Cheney, according to the former senior intelligence official. But a lesson was learned in the incident: The public had supported the idea of retaliation, and was even asking why the U.S. didn't do more. The former official said that, a few weeks later, a meeting took place in the Vice-President's office. "The subject was how to create a casus belli between Tehran and Washington," he said.

In June, President Bush went on a farewell tour of Europe. He had tea with Queen Elizabeth II and dinner with Nicolas Sarkozy and Carla Bruni, the President and First Lady of France. The serious business was conducted out of sight, and involved a series of meetings on a new diplomatic effort to persuade the Iranians to halt their uranium-enrichment program. (Iran argues that its enrichment program is for civilian purposes and is legal under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.) Secretary of State Rice had been involved with developing a new package of incentives. But the Administration's essential negotiating position seemed unchanged: talks could not take place until Iran halted the program. The Iranians have repeatedly and categorically rejected that precondition, leaving the diplomatic situation in a stalemate; they have not yet formally responded to the new incentives.

The continuing impasse alarms many observers. Joschka Fischer, the former German Foreign Minister, recently wrote in a syndicated column that it may not "be possible to freeze the Iranian nuclear program for the duration of the negotiations to avoid a military confrontation before they are completed. Should this newest attempt fail, things will soon get serious. Deadly serious." When I spoke to him last week, Fischer, who has extensive contacts in the diplomatic community, said that the latest European approach includes a new element: the willingness of the U.S. and the Europeans to accept something less than a complete cessation of enrichment as an intermediate step. "The proposal says that the Iranians must stop manufacturing new centrifuges and the other side will stop all further sanction activities in the U.N. Security Council," Fischer said, although Iran would still have to freeze its enrichment activities when formal negotiations begin. "This could be acceptable to the Iranians—if they have good will."

The big question, Fischer added, is in Washington. "I think the Americans are deeply divided on the issue of what to do about Iran," he said. "Some officials are concerned about the fallout from a military attack and others think an attack is unavoidable. I know the Europeans, but I have no idea where the Americans will end up on this issue."

There is another complication: American Presidential politics. Barack Obama has said that, if elected, he would begin talks with Iran with no "self-defeating" preconditions (although only after diplomatic groundwork had been laid). That position has been vigorously criticized by John McCain. The Washington *Post* recently quoted Randy Scheunemann, the McCain campaign's national-security director, as stating that McCain supports the White House's position, and that the program be suspended before talks begin. What Obama is proposing, Scheunemann said, "is unilateral cowboy summitry."

Scheunemann, who is known as a neoconservative, is also the McCain campaign's most important channel of communication with the White House. He is a friend of David Addington, Dick Cheney's chief of staff. I have heard differing accounts of Scheunemann's influence with McCain; though some close to the McCain campaign talk about him as a possible national-security adviser, others say he is someone who isn't taken seriously while "telling Cheney and others what they want to hear," as a senior McCain adviser put it.

It is not known whether McCain, who is the ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, has been formally briefed on the operations in Iran. At the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, in June, Obama repeated his plea for "tough and principled diplomacy." But he also said, along with McCain, that he would keep the threat of military action against Iran on the table. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM

An audio interview with Seymour M. Hersh.

A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE ISLAND IN THE WIND

A Danish community's victory over carbon emissions.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

Jørgen Tranberg is a farmer who lives on the Danish island of Samsø. He is a beefy man with a mop of brown hair and an unpredictable sense of humor. When I arrived at his house, one gray morning this spring, he was sitting in his kitchen, smoking a cigarette and watching grainy images on a black-and-white TV. The images turned out to be closed-circuit shots from his barn. One of his cows, he told me, was about to give birth, and he was keeping an eye on her. We talked for a few minutes, and then, laughing, he asked me if I wanted to climb his wind turbine. I was pretty sure I didn't, but I said yes anyway.

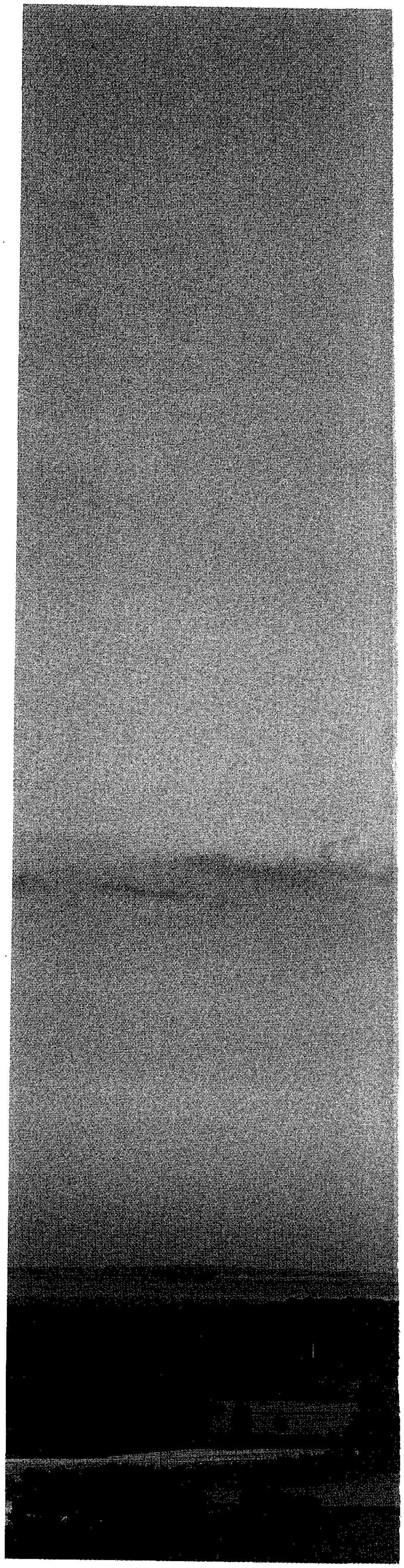
We got into Tranberg's car and bounced along a rutted dirt road. The turbine loomed up in front of us. When we reached it, Tranberg stubbed out his cigarette and opened a small door in the base of the tower. Inside were eight ladders, each about twenty feet tall, attached one above the other. We started up, and were soon huffing. Above the last ladder, there was a trapdoor, which led to a sort of engine room. We scrambled into it, at which point we were standing on top of the generator. Tranberg pressed a button, and the roof slid open to reveal the gray sky and a patchwork of green and brown fields stretching toward the sea. He pressed another button. The rotors, which he had switched off during our climb, started to turn, at first sluggishly and then much more rapidly. It felt as if we were about to take off. I'd like to say the feeling was exhilarating; in fact, I found it sickening. Tranberg looked at me and started to laugh.

Samsø, which is roughly the size of Nantucket, sits in what's known as the Kattegat, an arm of the North Sea. The island is bulgy in the south and narrows to a bladelike point in the north, so that on a map it looks a bit like a woman's torso and a bit like a meat cleaver. It has twenty-two villages that hug the narrow streets; out back are fields where farmers grow potatoes and wheat and strawberries. Thanks to Denmark's peculiar geography, Samsø is smack in the center of the country and, at the same time, in the middle of nowhere.

For the past decade or so, Samsø has been the site of an unlikely social movement. When it began, in the late nineteen-nineties, the island's forty-three hundred inhabitants had what might be described as a conventional attitude toward energy: as long as it continued to arrive, they weren't much interested in it. Most Samsingers heated their houses with oil, which was brought in on tankers. They used electricity imported from the mainland via cable, much of which was generated by burning coal. As a result, each Samsinger put into the atmosphere, on average, nearly eleven tons of carbon dioxide annually.

Then, quite deliberately, the residents of the island set about changing this. They formed energy coöperatives and organized seminars on wind power. They removed their furnaces and replaced them with heat pumps. By 2001, fossil-fuel use on Samsø had been cut in half. By 2003, instead of importing electricity, the island was exporting it, and by 2005 it was producing from renewable sources more energy than it was using.

The residents of Samsø that I spoke to were clearly proud of their accomplishment. All the same, they insisted on their ordinariness. They were, they noted, not wealthy, nor were they especially well educated or idealistic. They weren't even terribly adventuresome. "We are a conservative farming community" is how one Samsinger put



Once people on Samsø started thinking about energy, a local farmer explains, "it became a kind of sport." Photograph by Joachim Ladefoged.

VII

it. "We are only normal people," Tranberg told me. "We are not some special people."

This year, the world is expected to burn through some thirty-one billion barrels of oil, six billion tons of coal, and a hundred trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The combustion of these fossil fuels will produce, in aggregate, some four hundred quadrillion B.T.U.s of energy. It will also yield around thirty billion tons of carbon dioxide. Next year, global consumption of fossil fuels is expected to grow by about two per cent, meaning that emissions will rise by more than half a billion tons, and the following year consumption is expected to grow by yet another two per cent.

When carbon dioxide is released into the air, about a third ends up, in relatively short order, in the oceans. (CO_2 dissolves in water to form a weak acid; this is the cause of the phenomenon known as "ocean acidification.") A quarter is absorbed by terrestrial ecosystems—no one is quite sure exactly how or where—and the rest remains in the atmosphere. If current trends in emissions continue, then sometime within the next four or five decades the chemistry of the oceans will have been altered to such a degree that many marine organisms—including reef-building corals—will be pushed toward extinction. Meanwhile, atmospheric CO_2 levels are projected to reach five hundred and fifty parts per million—twice pre-industrial levels—virtually guaranteeing an eventual global temperature increase of three or more degrees. The consequences of this warming are difficult to predict in detail, but even broad, conservative estimates are terrifying: at least fifteen and possibly as many as thirty per cent of the planet's plant and animal species will be threatened; sea levels will rise by several feet; yields of crops like wheat and corn will decline significantly in a number of areas where they are now grown as staples; regions that depend on glacial runoff or seasonal snowmelt—currently home to more than a billion people—will face severe water shortages; and what now counts as a hundred-year drought will occur in some parts of the world as frequently as once a decade.

Today, with CO_2 levels at three hundred and eighty-five parts per million, the disruptive impacts of climate change are already apparent. The Arctic ice cap, which has shrunk by half since the nineteen-fifties, is melting at an annual rate of twenty-four thousand square miles, meaning that an expanse of ice the size of West Virginia is disappearing each year. Over the past ten years, forests covering a hundred and fifty million acres in the United States and Canada have died from warming-related beetle infestations. It is believed that rising temperatures are contributing to the growing number of international refugees—"Climate change is today one of the main drivers of forced displacement," the United Nations' high commissioner for refugees, António Guterres, said recently—and to armed conflict: some experts see a link between the fighting in Darfur, which has claimed as many as three hundred thousand lives, and changes in rainfall patterns in equatorial Africa.

"If we keep going down this path, the Darfur crisis will be only one crisis among dozens of others," President Nicolas Sarkozy, of France, told a meeting of world leaders in April. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, has called climate change "the defining challenge of our age."

In the context of this challenge, Samsø's accomplishments could be seen as trivial. Certainly, in numerical terms they don't amount to much: all the island's avoided emissions of the past ten years are overwhelmed by the CO_2 that a single coal-fired power plant will emit in the next three weeks, and China is building new coal-fired plants at the rate of roughly four a month. But it is also in this context that the island's efforts are most significant. Samsø transformed its energy systems in a single decade. Its experience suggests how the carbon problem, as huge as it is, could be dealt with, if we were willing to try.

Samsø set out to reinvent itself thanks to a series of decisions that it had relatively little to do with. The first was made by the Danish Ministry of Environment and Energy in 1997. The ministry, looking for ways to promote innovation, decided to sponsor a renewable-energy contest. In order to enter, a community had to submit a plan showing how it could wean itself off fossil fuels. An engineer who didn't actually live on Samsø thought the island would make a good candidate. In consultation with Samsø's mayor, he drew up a plan and submitted it. When it was announced that Samsø had won, the general reaction among residents was puzzlement. "I had to listen twice before I believed it," one farmer told me.

The brief surge of interest that followed the announcement soon dissipated. Besides its designation as Denmark's "renewable-energy island," Samsø received basically nothing—no prize money or special tax breaks, or even government assistance. One of the few peo-

"A couple more sieges and I'll go into political commentary."

ple on the island to think the project was worth pursuing was Søren Hermansen.

Hermansen, who is now forty-nine, is a trim man with close-cropped hair, ruddy cheeks, and dark-blue eyes. He was born on Samsø and, save for a few stints away, to travel and go to university, has lived there his entire life. His father was a farmer who grew, among other things, beets and parsley. Hermansen, too, tried his hand at farming—he took over the family's hundred acres when his father retired—but he discovered he wasn't suited to it. "I like to talk, and vegetables don't respond," he told me. He leased his fields to a neighbor and got a job teaching environmental studies at a local boarding school. Hermansen found the renewable-energy-island concept intriguing. When some federal money was found to fund a single staff position, he became the project's first employee.

For months, which stretched into years, not much happened. "There was this conservative hesitating, waiting for the neighbor to do the move," Hermansen recalled. "I know the community and I know this is what usually happens." Rather than working against the islanders' tendency to look to one another, Hermansen tried to work with it.

"One reason to live here can be social relations," he said. "This renewable-energy project could be a new kind of social relation, and we used that." Whenever there was a meeting to discuss a local issue—any local issue—Hermansen attended and made his pitch. He asked Samsingers to think about what it would be like to work together on something they could all be proud of. Occasionally, he brought free beer along to the discussions. Meanwhile, he began trying to enlist the support of the island's opinion leaders. "This is where the hard work starts, convincing the first movers to be active," he said. Eventually, much as Hermansen had hoped, the social dynamic that had stalled the project began to work in its favor. As more people got involved, that prompted others to do so. After a while, enough Samsingers were participating that participation became the norm.

"People on Samsø started thinking about energy," Ingvar Jørgensen, a farmer who heats his house with solar hot water and a straw-burning furnace, told me. "It became a kind of sport."

"It's exciting to be a part of this," Brian Kjær, an electrician who installed a small-scale turbine in his back yard, said. Kjær's turbine, which is seventy-two feet tall, generates more current than his family of three can use, and also more than the power lines leading away from his house can handle, so he uses the excess to heat water, which he stores in a tank that he rigged up in his garage. He told me that one day he would like to use the leftover electricity to produce hydrogen, which could potentially run a fuel-cell car.

"Søren, he has talked again and again, and slowly it's spread to a lot of people," he said.

Since becoming the "renewable energy island," Samsø has increasingly found itself an object of study. Researchers often travel great distances to get there, a fact that is not without its own irony. The day after I arrived, from New York via Copenhagen, a group of professors from the University of Toyama, in Japan, came to look around. They had arranged a tour with Hermansen, and he invited me to tag along. We headed off to meet the group in his electric Citroën, which is painted blue with white puffy clouds on the doors. It was a drizzly day, and when we got to the dock the water was choppy. Hermansen commiserated with the Japanese, who had just disembarked from the swaying ferry; then we all boarded a bus.

Our first stop was a hillside with a panoramic view of the island. Several wind turbines exactly like the one I had climbed with Tranberg were whooshing nearby. In the wet and the gray, they were the only things stirring. Off in the distance, the silent fields gave way to the Kattegat, where another group of turbines could be seen, arranged in a soldierly line in the water.

All told, Samsø has eleven large land-based turbines. (It has about a dozen additional micro-turbines.) This is a lot of turbines for a relatively small number of people, and the ratio is critical to Samsø's success, as is the fact that the wind off the Kattegat blows pretty much continuously; flags on Samsø, I noticed, do not wave—they stick straight out, as in children's drawings. Hermansen told us that the land-based turbines are a hundred and fifty feet tall, with rotors that are eighty feet long. Together, they produce some twenty-six million kilowatt-hours a year, which is just about enough to meet all the island's demands for electricity. (This is true in an arithmetic sense; as a practical matter, Samsø's production of electricity and its needs fluctuate, so that sometimes it is feeding power into the grid and sometimes it is drawing power from it.) The offshore turbines, meanwhile, are even taller—a hundred and ninety-five feet high, with rotors that extend a hundred and twenty feet. A single offshore turbine generates roughly eight million kilowatt-hours of electricity a year, which, at Danish rates of energy use, is enough to satisfy the needs of some two thousand homes. The offshore turbines—there are ten of them—were erected to compensate for Samsø's continuing use of fossil fuels in its cars, trucks, and ferries. Their combined output, of around eighty million kilowatt-hours a year, provides the energy equivalent of all the gasoline and diesel oil consumed on the island, and then some; in aggregate, Samsø generates about ten per cent more power than it consumes.

"When we started, in 1997, nobody expected this to happen," Hermansen told the group. "When we talked to local people, they said, Yes, come on, maybe in your dreams." Each land-based turbine cost the equivalent of eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Each offshore turbine cost around three million dollars. Some of Samsø's turbines were erected by a single investor, like Tranberg; others were purchased collectively. At least four hundred and fifty island residents own shares in the onshore turbines, and a roughly equal number own shares in those offshore. Shareholders, who also include many nonresidents, receive annual dividend checks based on the prevailing price of electricity and how much their turbine has generated.

"If I'm reduced to being a customer, then if I like something I buy it, and if I don't like it I don't buy it," Hermansen said. "But I don't care about the production. We care about the production, because we own the wind turbines. Every time they turn around, it means money in the bank. And, being part of it, we also feel responsible." Thanks to a policy put in place by Denmark's government in the late nineteen-nineties, utilities are required to offer ten-year fixed-rate contracts for wind power that they can sell to customers elsewhere. Under the terms of these contracts, a turbine should—bar-ring mishap—repay a shareholder's initial investment in about eight years.

From the hillside, we headed to the town of Ballen. There we stopped at a red shed-shaped building made out of corrugated metal. Inside, enormous bales of straw were stacked against the walls. Hermansen explained that the building was a district heating plant that had been designed to run on biomass. The bales, each representing the equivalent of fifty gallons of oil, would be fed into a furnace, where water would be heated to a hundred and fifty-eight degrees. This hot water would then be piped underground to two hundred and sixty houses in Ballen and in the neighboring town of Brundby. In this way, the energy of the straw burned at the plant would be transferred to the homes, where it could be used to provide heat and hot water.

Samsø has two other district heating plants that burn straw—one in Tranebjerg, the other in Onsbjerg—and also a district plant, in Nordby, that burns wood chips. When we visited the Nordby plant, later that afternoon, it was filled with what looked like mulch. (The place smelled like a potting shed.) Out back was a field covered in rows of solar panels, which provide additional hot water when the sun is shining. Between the rows, sheep with long black faces were munching on the grass. The Japanese researchers pulled out their cameras as the sheep snuffled toward them, expectantly.

Of course, burning straw or wood, like burning fossil fuels, produces CO_2. The key distinction is that while fossil fuels release carbon that otherwise would have remained sequestered, biomass releases carbon that would have entered the atmosphere anyway, through decomposition. As long as biomass regrows, the CO_2 released in its combustion should be reabsorbed, meaning that the cycle is—or at least can be—carbon neutral. The wood chips used in the Nordby plant come from fallen trees that previously would have been left to rot. The straw for the Ballen-Brundby plant comes mainly from wheat stalks that would previously have been burned in the fields. Together, the biomass heating plants prevent the release of some twenty-seven hundred tons of carbon dioxide a year.

In addition to biomass, Samsø is experimenting on a modest scale with biofuels: a handful of farmers have converted their

SONGS OF A SEASON

for here or to go—
a glass mug, a paper cup—
life is fast, art slow

—

only a few years
before all that I am blows
free, subatomic

—

not for me that life
the careless joy of the dog
not for me that leap

—

how to say
beautiful weekend
in chinese?

is "weekend" a concept
in China?

rose petals fell
and the wine uncorked itself
        for our pleasure . . .

—

what comfort
do you not give me
little cat?

—

wheatfield bleached near blond
light licking the Luberon
and the sea beyond

—

the cherry orchard
harvested but for one tree
found that afternoon

—

yesterday I saw a fox
        then saw
            it was a deer

all year
    I have been mistaking
        the hunted
            for hunter

—

for the lilacs the bees
for the maples the jays
for the locust the chickadee
for the lavender the butterfly
for the bleeding heart the ruby throat
for my lips your tanned throat

—

in mandarin
The Little Szechuan Place
in english
Shangri-La
this modest joint
serves taiwanese home cooking

pigs' ears, beef rolls, doughnuts
for dipping in soy milk

* * *

air thick
with lilac
the strong sun liquefying
the street

* * *

mosquito whine
dinnertime

* * *

mourning dove at evening

and the ancients thought Venus

two stars equally bright
at morning and evening

doubling the source
of day's beauty

* * *

your plum lips
your slim hips
fingertips

* * *

and while I was not thinking
the lake rolled on

and while I was thinking
on a soft summer day sitting by the lake
I missed the lake

* * *

with my swizzle stick
and my scissor kick
I'm set for summer
drinks on the deck
and dives from the dock

the main halyard's new
nylon white and blue
the old mainsail's patched
no mice in the hatch

let's cast off from the dock
and break out the bock
set sail for Split Rock

* * *

reached for a raspberry
got a nettle

forgot the stove flame
burnt the old kettle

* * *

caffè latte—"caf
or decaf?" little choices
of an afternoon

—*Maureen N. McLane*

cars and tractors to run on canola oil. We stopped to visit one such farmer, who grows his own seeds, presses his own oil, and feeds the leftover mash to his cows. The farmer couldn't be located, so Hermansen started up the press himself. He stuck a finger under the spout, then popped it into his mouth. "The oil is very good," he announced. "You can use it in your car, and you can use it on your salad."

After the tour, I went back with Hermansen to his office, in a building known as the Energiakademi. The academy, which looks like a Bauhaus interpretation of a barn, is covered with photovoltaic cells and insulated with shredded newspapers. It is supposed to serve as a sort of interpretive center, though when I visited, the place was so new that the rooms were mostly empty. Some high-school students were kneeling on the floor, trying to put together a miniature turbine.

I asked Hermansen whether there were any projects that hadn't worked out. He listed several, including a plan to use natural gas produced from cow manure and an experiment with electric cars that failed when one of the demonstration vehicles spent most of the year in the shop. The biggest disappointment, though, had to do with consumption.

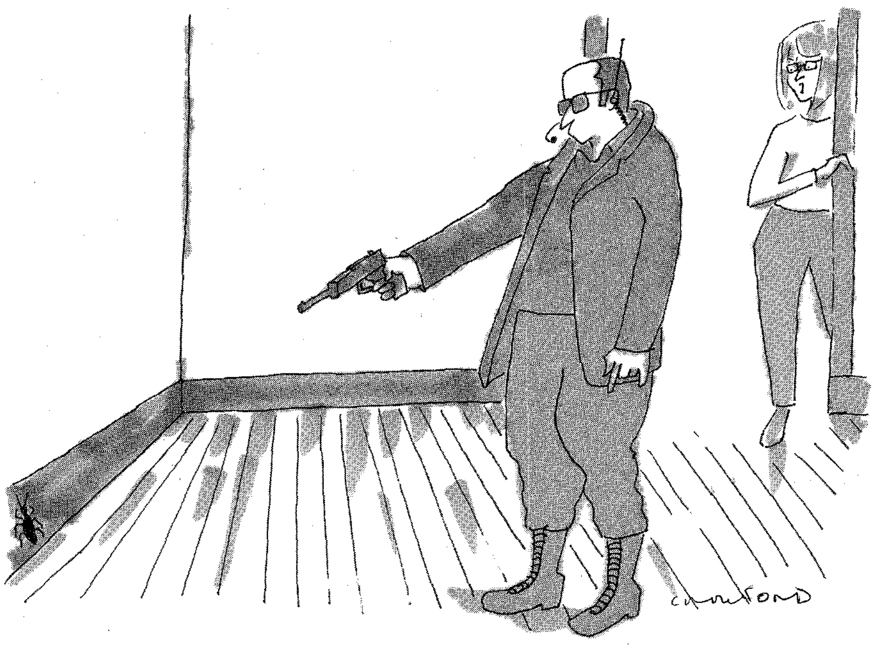
"We made several programs for energy savings," he told me. "But people are acting—what do you call it?—irresponsibly. They behave like monkeys." For example, families that insulated their homes better also tended to heat more rooms, "so we ended up with zero." Essentially, he said, energy use on the island has remained constant for the past decade.

I asked why he thought the renewable-energy-island effort had got as far as it did. He said he wasn't sure, because different people had had different motives for participating. "From the very egoistic to the more over-all perspective, I think we had all kinds of reasons."

Finally, I asked what he thought other communities might take from Samsø's experience.

"We always hear that we should think globally and act locally," he said. "I understand what that means—I think we as a nation should be part of the global consciousness. But each individual cannot be part of that. So 'Think locally, act locally' is the key message for us."

"There's this wish for showcases," he added. "When we are selected to be the



"Our last exterminator wasn't worth jack."

showcase for Denmark, I feel ashamed that Denmark doesn't produce anything bigger than that. But I feel proud because we are the showcase. So I did my job, and my colleagues did their job, and so did the people of Samsø."

Around the same time that Samsø was designated Denmark's renewable-energy island, a group of Swiss scientists who were working on similar issues performed a thought experiment. The scientists, all of whom were affiliated with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, asked themselves what level of energy use would be sustainable, not just for an island or a small European nation but for the entire world. The answer they came up with—two thousand watts per person—furnished the name for a new project: the 2,000-Watt Society.

"What it's important, I think, to know is that the 2,000-Watt Society is not a program of hard life," the director of the project, Roland Stulz, told me when I went to speak to him at his office, in the Zurich suburb of Dübendorf. "It is not what we call *Gürtel enger schnallen*"—belt tightening—"it's not starving, it's not having less comfort or fun. It's a creative approach to the future."

Stulz, who is sixty-three, is a soft-spoken man with dark wavy hair and a salt-and-pepper mustache. He was trained as an architect and later became interested in energy-efficient building. In 2001, when he took over the 2,000-Watt Society, his mandate was to push it into the realm of the practical. (His work is funded in part by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, which has campuses in Zurich and Lausanne, and in part by private donations.) He began holding meetings that brought researchers together with government officials from cities like Zurich and Basel.

"I divided them into groups," Stulz recalled. "And I told them, At four o'clock each group must come and tell the whole session what project they will do in the future, and who will lead the projects. And they said, Oh, it's not possible. But at four o'clock everybody came with a project. And that's how we started." The cantons of Geneva and Basel-Stadt and the city of Zurich subsequently endorsed the aims of the 2,000-Watt Society, as did the Swiss Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy, and Communications. "At first glance, the objective of a two-thousand-watt society appears unrealistic," Moritz Leuenberger, the head of the federal department, has said. "But the necessary technology already exists."

One afternoon, Stulz took me to visit the headquarters of an aquatic-research center known as EAWAG, which was designed to meet the 2,000-Watt Society's energy-efficiency goals. (EAWAG is an acronym for a German name so complicated that even German speakers can't remember it.) We drove over in his Volvo, which runs on compressed natural gas produced in part from rotting vegetables. When I first caught sight of the place, I thought it was covered with banners; these turned out to be tinted-glass panels. Inside, hanging from a set of chains in a large atrium, was what I took to be a sculpture of a bug. This turned out to be a model of a water molecule, enlarged some ten billion times.

Among the many unusual features of the EAWAG Center is a lack of usual features. The building, which opened in 2006, has no furnace; it is so tightly insulated that, on most days, the warmth thrown off by the office equipment and the two hundred people who work inside is enough to keep it comfortable. Additional heat is provided by the sun—in winter, the outside panels tilt to allow in the maximum amount of light—and by air sucked in from underground. The building also has no conventional air-conditioners: in summer, the panels tilt to provide shade, and if the building gets hot during the day, at night the windows at the top of the atrium open, and the warm air rushes out. It supplies about a third of its own electricity with photovoltaic panels installed on the roof, and gets its hot water from solar collectors. Its bathrooms are equipped with specially designed "no mix" toilets that separate out urine, which contains potentially useful phosphorus and nitrogen. ("Exploiting common waste as a resource is a mark of sustainable civilization," a booklet on the building observes.)

"It's not a miracle, such a building," Stulz told me when we went to have a cup of coffee in the center's cheerfully modernist cafeteria. "It's just putting smart elements together in a smart way." Outside, it was rainy and forty-three degrees; inside the temperature was a pleasant seventy.

One way to think about the 2,000-Watt Society is in terms of light bulbs. Let's say you turn on twenty lamps, each with a hundred-watt bulb. Together, the lamps will draw two thousand watts of power. Left on for a day, they will consume forty-eight kilowatt-hours of energy; left on for a year, they will consume seventeen thousand five hundred and twenty kilowatt-hours. A person living a two-thousand-watt life would consume in all his activities—working, eating, travelling—the same amount of energy as those twenty bulbs, or seventeen thousand five hundred and twenty kilowatt-hours annually.

Most of the people in the world today consume far less than this. The average Bangladeshi, for example, uses only about twenty-six hundred kilowatt-hours a year—this figure includes all forms of energy, from electricity to transportation fuel—which is the equivalent of using roughly three hundred watts continuously. The average Indian uses about eighty-seven hundred kilowatt-hours a year, making India a one-thousand-watt society, while the average Chinese uses about thirteen thousand kilowatt-hours a year, making China a fifteen-hundred-watt society.

Those of us who live in the industrialized world, by contrast, consume far more than two thousand watts. Switzerland, for instance, is a five-thousand-watt society. Most other Western European countries are six-thousand-watt societies; the United States and Canada run at twelve thousand watts. One of the founding principles of the 2,000-Watt Society is that this disparity is in itself unsustainable. "It's a basic matter of fairness" is how Stulz put it to me. But increasing energy use in developing countries to match that of industrialized nations would be unacceptable on ecological grounds. Were per-capita demand in the developing world to reach current European levels, global energy consumption would more than double, and were it to rise to the American level, global energy consumption would more than triple. The 2,000-Watt Society gives industrialized countries a target for cutting energy use at the same time that it sets a limit for growth in developing nations.

The last time Switzerland was a two-thousand-watt society was in the early nineteen-sixties. By the end of that decade, energy use had reached three thousand watts, and by the mid-seventies it was up to four thousand watts. This rapid rise could be said to follow from technological advances—the spread of automobiles, the advent of jet travel, the proliferation of appliances and electronic devices—or it could be seen as just the reverse: a failure to apply technology where it is needed. A few years ago, a group of Swiss scientists published a white paper—or, to use the Swiss term, a "white book"—on the feasibility of a 2,000-Watt Society. Relying on widely agreed-upon figures, the scientists estimated that two-thirds of all the primary energy consumed in the world today is wasted, mostly in the form of heat that nobody wants or uses. ("Primary energy" is the energy contained in, say, a lump of coal; "useful energy" is the light emitted by a bulb once that coal has been burned to produce steam, the steam has been used to run a turbine, and the resulting electricity has been transmitted over the grid to heat the bulb's filament.) This same paper concluded that, with currently available technologies, buildings could be made eighty per cent more efficient, cars fifty per cent more efficient, and motors twenty-five per cent more efficient.

In Switzerland, I visited several other buildings that, like the EAWAG Center, had been specifically designed to maximize efficiency. One was an upscale apartment building in Basel. The apartments have eighteen-inch-thick walls filled with insulation, triple-paned windows coated with a special reflective film, and a heat-recovery system that captures eighty per cent of the energy normally lost through ventilation. Instead of a boiler, it has a geothermal heat pump, which essentially sucks energy out of the groundwater. In the summer, the same system is used for cooling. (In compliance with Swiss building codes, the building also contains a bomb shelter.)

"The construction industry is very traditional," Franco Fregnan, an engineer who showed me around the apartments, said. "If you bring an innovation to them, you usually have to wait another generation until it arrives into a building. And we are trying to change that, step by step."

"It usually makes sense to become more intelligent in any human activity," Stulz told me. "As the former Saudi Arabian oil minister Sheikh Yamani once said, the Stone Age didn't end because there were no more stones. It ended because people became more intelligent."

What would it take to lead a two-thousand-watt life? When I posed this question to Stulz, he gave me another research paper, which offers case

SEVEN WORDS YOU CAN'T SAY IN A CARTOON

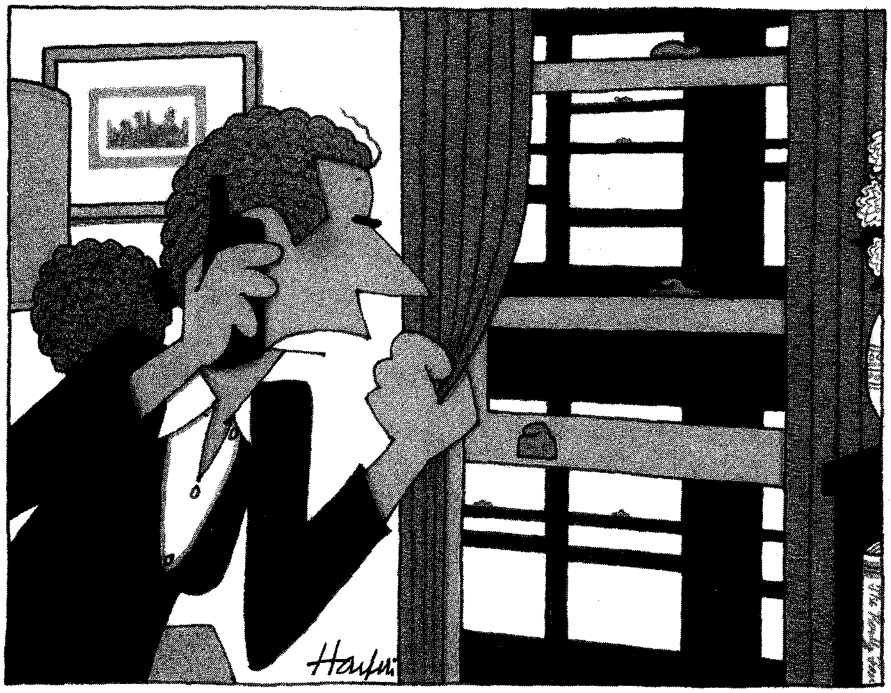
studies of six fictionalized households. The Jeannerets are an imaginary family of four who live in Glattbrugg, a town north of Zurich. They own an energy-efficient house, travel by electric bike or train, and occasionally rent a car—they belong to a car-sharing service—to do their grocery shopping. The Moeris, fictional farmers who live northeast of Bern, generate their own electricity with natural gas produced from cow manure; and Alain, Michel, Angela, and Marlène, fictional students living in Geneva, share all their appliances, use the tram, and like to go hiking in the French Alps during school breaks. "There is no formula for how to achieve a two-thousand-watt society," the paper declares. "Three things are needed: societal decisions . . . technical innovation, and the resolve of every individual to act in an energy-conscious way."

Very broadly speaking, the average Swiss today uses energy as follows: fifteen hundred watts per day for living and office space (this includes heat and hot water), eleven hundred watts for food and consumer items (the energy that it takes to produce and transport goods is referred to as "embodied" or "gray" energy), six hundred watts for electricity, five hundred watts for automobile travel, two hundred and fifty watts for air travel, and a hundred and fifty watts for public transportation. Each person's share of Switzerland's public infrastructure, which includes facilities like water- and sewage-treatment plants, comes to nine hundred watts. Reducing these five thousand watts to two thousand would seem to require a significant reduction in every realm. Assuming that infrastructure-related consumption could be cut to five hundred watts, a person who continued to use fifteen hundred watts for living and office space would have nothing left for food, electricity, and transportation. Similarly, a person who continued to travel and use electricity at current rates would consume two thousand watts without having anywhere to live or work, or anything to eat.

While I was in Switzerland, I kept looking for people who actually led two-thousand-watt lives.

"I'm pretty close, except for this stupid air travel," Gerhard Schmitt, the vice-president for planning and logistics at the Zurich campus of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, told me. "I go once to Shanghai and it's gone." (A round-trip flight between Zurich and Shanghai is the equivalent of using something like eight hundred watts continuously for a year.)

"Let's skip that question," Stulz said when I put it to him. While he lives in an energy-efficient apartment, he, too, travels a great deal; when I visited, he had just returned from a conference in New Delhi, a round trip that used roughly the equivalent of six hundred watts for the year.



"Yes, I heard a scream and a cry for help. And then there was some very ominous music."

The one person I spoke to who did seem to be leading a two-thousand-watt life, or something very near to it, was an engineer named Robert Uetz. Uetz works in the same building as Stulz, and when we returned from visiting the EAWAG Center he was still in his office, even though it was after six. Stulz encouraged me to go talk to him.

"We don't experience it as a restriction," Uetz told me of his two-thousand-watt life style. "On the contrary. I don't feel that we're giving up anything." Uetz and his wife, a dentist, live with their two children in the city of Winterthur, near Zurich. About ten years ago, they bought a two-thousand-square-foot house in a newly built energy-efficient development. The house is heated with a geothermal heat pump—"It's crazy to heat a house with fossil fuels," Uetz said—and has a solar hot-water system. Uetz added photovoltaic panels to the roof to produce electricity; in the winter the panels produce somewhat less power than the house uses—it's equipped with the most energy-efficient lights and appliances the family could find—and in the summer they produce somewhat more, so that over the course of the year the house's electricity use nets out to zero.

"The most important decision was that we wouldn't have a car," Uetz told me. "That was a conscious decision. We looked for a house where we didn't need a car." Driving a lot—even in what, by today's standards at least, counts as an energy-efficient vehicle—also makes it difficult to live within two thousand watts. A person who drives a Toyota Prius ten thousand miles a year consumes roughly two hundred and twenty-five gallons of gasoline. This is equivalent to consuming around eight thousand kilowatt-hours, or to using nearly a thousand watts on a continuous basis. (For a family of four, the same gasoline consumption would come to almost two hundred and fifty watts per person.)

"It's a matter of what you're used to, but I find taking the train a lot more pleasant than driving," Uetz went on.

"On the train I can work and relax. If I took a car, I'd have to worry about parking and traffic, rain, snow, and a certain number of people who can't drive but are on the road anyway." When Uetz and his family go on vacation, they travel by rail. "The only thing I'd say that is sort of a restriction is the flying," he said. "Because, obviously, with the train where you can go is limited. We can't go to China, or if we did it would take a week."

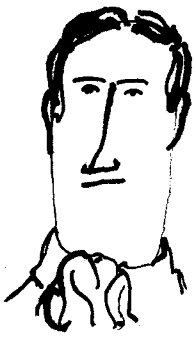
"I don't make a religion out of it," he added. "I wouldn't do it if I didn't feel good about it—it's how I like to live."

By the 2,000-Watt Society's own reckoning, cutting consumption is just half—or, perhaps more accurately, a quarter—of what needs to be done. The project's ultimate goal is a world where people consume no more than two thousand watts apiece and where fifteen hundred of those watts come from carbon-free sources. In such a world, everyone would use energy sparingly, like Robert Uetz, and generate it renewably, like Jørgen Tranberg. In such a world, filled with windmills and net-zero houses, carbon emissions would fall sharply, and the concentration of CO_2 in the atmosphere would slowly level off. But how realistic is such a scenario?

Before I left Switzerland to fly back to New York (a trip equivalent to using roughly two hundred and fifty watts continuously for a year), I went to speak to the president of the research council of the Swiss National Science Foundation, Dieter Imboden. Imboden, who is sixty-four, is a compact man with an oval face and silvery hair. He received his training in theoretical solid-state physics, later became interested in environmental physics, and for several years chaired the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology's environmental-sciences department. In the late nineties, he served as the director of the 2,000-Watt Society. He said that as a scientist he could see no technical barriers to creating a two-thousand-watt world.

"We are putting our mental energy into the wrong basket," he told me. "Nothing has to be reinvented—for an engineer it's not even a challenge."

"The problems of the twenty-first century are a different kind of problem," he went on. "And I think our society will be measured according to the solution of this new kind of problem, which cannot be solved with the same recipe as the flight to the moon, or the Manhattan Project. It's a qualitative difference—a paradigm change in the role of science for our society."



He continued, "The difficult thing is what I call 'constructed Switzerland.' You in America could call it 'constructed United States'—the buildings and how they are built, but also where they are built and, even more important, the roads, the railroads, the lines for energy, for wastewater, and so on. It's not economically feasible to replace everything in one instant." But since infrastructure should in any case be replaced at the rate of roughly two per cent a year, if the project is approached incrementally, it's a different task. Then, Imboden said, "it suddenly *is* feasible."

As of yet, no one has undertaken a rigorous analysis of the economics of a transition to two thousand watts. Researchers have tended, rather, to focus on the price of stabilizing carbon-dioxide levels in the atmosphere at a given concentration—either, say, five hundred and fifty parts per million, which is double pre-industrial levels, or four hundred and fifty parts, which, many climate scientists say, is the very highest level advisable. Perhaps the most often cited economic study is the Stern Review, commissioned by the British government and named for its lead author, Sir Nicholas Stern, formerly the chief economist for the World Bank. The Stern Review, published in October, 2006, concluded that greenhouse-gas levels could be stabilized below double pre-industrial concentrations at a cost to global G.D.P. of around one per cent a year. (The Stern Review considered not just CO_2 but other greenhouse gases, like methane and nitrous oxide, as well.) An analysis released last year by the Swedish utility Vattenfall, with research assistance from the American consulting firm McKinsey & Company, reached a similar conclusion: it determined that many measures to reduce carbon emissions, like improving building insulation, would save money, while others, like installing wind turbines, would carry a price. The Vattenfall report estimates that "if all low-cost opportunities are addressed," CO_2 levels could be stabilized at four hundred and fifty parts per million with an annual expenditure of six-tenths of one per cent of global G.D.P.

Though one per cent of the global economy is clearly a lot of money, in the grand scheme of things it's also clearly manageable. It is about a ninth of what's currently spent on health care, a seventh of what's spent on oil, and half of what's spent on defense. (More than forty per cent of all the world's military expenditures are made by the United States.) Perhaps most pertinent, it's a far smaller figure than the cost of inaction. The Stern Review projects that if current emissions trends are allowed to continue, the eventual damage from climate change will "be equivalent to losing at least 5% of global GDP each year, now and forever," and that "if a wider range of risks and impacts is taken into account" that figure could "rise to 20% of GDP or more."

Twenty years ago, NASA's chief climate scientist, James Hansen, testified on Capitol Hill about the dangers of global warming. Just a few days ago, Hansen returned to the Hill to testify again. "Now, as then, frank assessment of scientific data yields conclusions that are shocking to the body politic," he said. "Now, as then, I can assert that these conclusions have a certainty exceeding ninety-nine per cent. The difference is that now we have used up all slack in the schedule." Hansen went on to warn that there would be no practical way to prevent "disastrous" climate change unless the next President and Congress act quickly to curb emissions. Few parts of the U.S. may be as windy as Samsø, or as well organized as Switzerland, but just about everywhere there are possibilities for generating energy more inventively and using it more intelligently. Realizing these possibilities will require a great deal of effort. We may well decide not to make this effort. Such a choice to put off change, however, will merely drive us toward it. ♦

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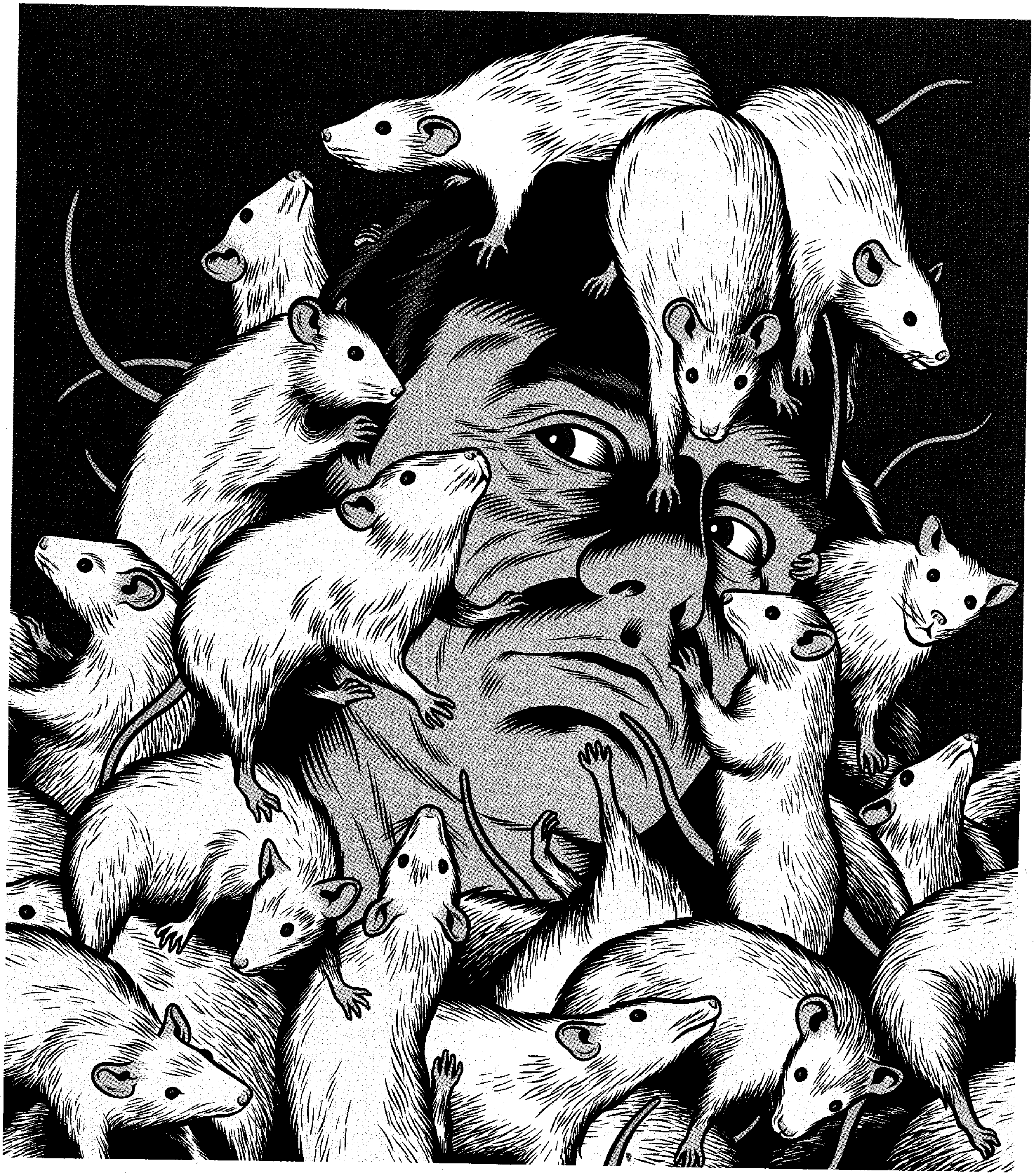
More photographs of Samsø.

FICTION

THIRTEEN HUNDRED RATS

BY T. CORAGHESSAN BOYLE



There was a man in our village who never in his life had a pet of any kind until his wife died. By my calculation, Gerard Loomis was in his mid-fifties when Marietta was taken from him, but at the ceremony in the chapel he looked so scorched and stricken that people mistook him for a man ten or twenty years older. He sat collapsed in the front pew, his clothes mismatched and his limbs splayed in the extremity of his grief, looking as if he'd been dropped there from a great height, like a bird stripped of its feathers in some aerial catastrophe. Once the funeral was over and we'd all offered up our condolences and gone back to our respective homes, rumors began to circulate. Gerard wasn't eating. He wouldn't leave the house or change his clothes. He'd been seen bent over a trash barrel in the front yard, burning patent-leather pumps, brassieres, skirts, wigs, even the mink stole with its head and feet still attached that his late wife had worn with pride on Christmas, Easter, and Columbus Day.

People began to worry about him, and understandably so. Ours is a fairly close-knit community of a hundred and twenty souls, give or take a few, distributed among some fifty-two stone-and-timber houses that were erected nearly a century ago in what the industrialist B. P. Newhouse hoped would be a model of utopian living. We are not utopians, at least not in this generation, but our village, set as it is in the midst of six hundred acres of dense forest at the end of a consummately discreet road some forty miles from the city, has fostered, we like to think, a closeness and uniformity of outlook that you wouldn't find in some of the newer developments built right up to the edges of the malls, gallerias, and factory outlets that surround them.

He should have a dog, people said. That sounded perfectly reasonable to me. My wife and I have a pair of shelties (as well as two lorikeets, whose chatter provides a tranquil backdrop to our evenings by the fireplace, and one very fat angelfish in a tank all his own, on a stand in my study). One evening at dinner, my wife glanced at me over her reading glasses and said, "Do you know that, according to this article in the paper, ninety-seven per cent of pet owners say their pets make them smile at least once a day?" The shelties—Tim and Tim II—gazed up from beneath the table with wondering eyes as I fed scraps of meat into their mobile and receptive mouths.

CHARLES BURNS

"You think I ought to speak with him?" I said. "Gerard, I mean?"

"It couldn't hurt," my wife said. And then, the corners of her mouth sinking toward her chin, she added, "The poor man."

I went to visit him the next day—a Saturday, as it happened. The dogs needed walking, so I took them both with me, by way of example, I suppose, and because when I'm home—and not away on the business that takes me all over the world, sometimes for weeks or even months at a time—I like to give them as much attention as I can. Gerard's cottage was half a mile or so from our house, and I enjoyed the briskness of the season—it was early December, the holidays coming on, a fresh breeze spanking my cheeks. I let the dogs run free ahead of me and admired the way the pine forest that B. P. Newhouse had planted all those years ago framed and sculpted the sky. The first thing I noticed on coming up the walk was that Gerard hadn't bothered to rake the leaves from his lawn or cover any of his shrubs against the frost. There were other signs of neglect: the storm windows weren't up yet, garbage overspilled the two cans in the driveway, and a pine bough, a casualty of the last storm, lay across the roof of the house like the severed hand of a giant. I rang the bell.

Gerard was a long time answering. When he did finally come to the door, he held it open just a crack and gazed out at me as if I were a stranger. (I was nothing of the sort—our parents had known each other, we'd played couples bridge for years and had once taken a road trip to Hyannis Port together, not to mention the fact that we saw each other at the lake nearly every day in the summer, shared cocktails at the clubhouse, and basked in an air of mutual congratulation over our separate decisions not to complicate our lives with the burden of children.)

"Gerard," I said. "Hello. How are you feeling?"

He said nothing. He looked thinner than usual, haggard. I wondered if the rumors were true—that he wasn't eating, wasn't taking care of himself, that he'd given way to despair.

"I was just passing by and thought I'd stop in," I said, working up a grin, though I didn't feel much in the mood for levity and had begun to wish I'd stayed home and let my neighbor suffer in peace. "And look," I said, "I've brought Tim and Tim II with me." The dogs, hearing their names, drew themselves up out of the frost-blighted bushes and pranced across the doormat, inserting the long damp tubes of their snouts into the crack of the door.

Gerard's voice was hoarse. "I'm allergic to dogs," he said.

Ten minutes later, after we'd gone through the preliminaries and I was seated on the cluttered couch in front of the dead fireplace while Tim and Tim II whined from the front porch, I said, "Well, what about a cat?" And then, because I was mortified at the state to which he'd sunk—his clothes were grubby; he smelled; the house was like the lounge in a transient hotel—I found myself quoting my wife's statistic about smiling pet owners.

"I'm allergic to cats, too," he said. He was perched uncomfortably on the canted edge of a rocker and his eyes couldn't seem to find my face. "But I understand your concern, and I appreciate it. And you're not the first. Half a dozen people have been by, pushing one thing or another on me—pasta salad, a baked ham, profiteroles, and pets, too. Siamese fighting fish, hamsters, kittens. Mary Martinson caught me at the post office the other day, took hold of my arm, and lectured me for fifteen minutes on the virtues of emus. Can you believe it?"

"I feel foolish," I said.

"No, don't. You're right, all of you—I need to snap out of it. And you're right about a pet, too." He rose from the chair, which rocked crazily behind him. He was wearing a stained pair of white corduroy shorts and a sweatshirt that made him look as gaunt as the Masai my wife and I had photographed on our safari to Kenya the previous spring. "Let me show you," he said, and he wound his way through the tumbling stacks of magazines and newspapers scattered around the room and disappeared into the back hall. I sat there, feeling awkward—was this what it would be like if my wife should die before me?—but curious, too. And, in a strange way, validated. Gerard Loomis had a pet to keep him company: mission accomplished.

When he came back into the room, I thought at first that he'd slipped into some sort of garish jacket or cardigan, but then I saw, with a little jolt of surprise, that he was wearing a snake. Or, that is, a snake was draped over his shoulders, its extremities dangling beyond the length of his arms. "It's a python," he said. "Burmese. They get to be twenty-five feet long, though this one's just a baby."

I must have said something, but I can't really recall now what it was. I wasn't a herpetophobe or anything like that. It was just that a snake wasn't what we'd had in mind. Snakes didn't play fetch, didn't bound into the car panting their joy, didn't speak when you held a rawhide bone just above shoulder level and twitched it invitingly. As far as I knew, they didn't do much of anything, except exist. And bite.

"So what do you think?" he said. His voice lacked enthusiasm, as if he were trying to convince himself.

"Nice," I said.

I don't know why I'm telling this story—perhaps because what happened to Gerard could happen to any of us, I suppose, especially as we age and our spouses age and we're increasingly set adrift. But the thing is, the next part of what I'm going to relate here is a kind of fiction, really, or a fictive reconstruction of actual events, because two days after I was introduced to Gerard's python—he was thinking then of naming it either Jason or Siddhartha—my wife and I went off to Switzerland for an account I was overseeing there and didn't return for more than four months. In the interval, here's what happened.

There was a heavy snowfall the week before Christmas that year, and for the space of nearly two days the power lines were down. Gerard woke the first morning to a preternaturally cold house, and his first thought was for the snake. The man in the pet shop at the mall had given him a long lecture before he bought the animal. "They make great pets," he'd said. "You can let them roam the house if you want, and they'll find the places where they're comfortable. And the nice thing is they'll come to you and curl up on the couch or wherever, because of your body heat, you understand." The man—he wore a name tag that read "Bozeman" and he looked to be in his forties, with a gray-flecked goatee and his hair drawn back in a patchily dyed ponytail—clearly enjoyed dispensing advice. As well he should, seeing that he was charging some four hundred dollars for a single reptile that must have been as common as a garden worm in its own country. "But most of all, especially in this weather, you've got to keep him warm. This is a tropical animal we're talking about here, you understand? Never—and I mean never—let the temperature fall below eighty."

Gerard tried the light on the nightstand, but it was out. Ditto the light in the hall. Outside, the snow fell in clumps, as if it had been preformed into snowballs somewhere high in the troposphere. In the living room, the thermostat read sixty-three degrees, and when he tried to click the heat on nothing happened. The next thing he knew he was crumpling newspaper and stacking kindling in the fireplace, and where were the matches? A quick search around the house, everything a mess (and here the absence of Marietta bit into him, down deep, like a parasitical set of teeth), the drawers stuffed with refuse, dishes piled high, nothing where it was supposed to be. Finally, he retrieved an old lighter from a pair of paint-stained jeans on the floor in the back of the closet and he had the fire going. Then he went looking for Siddhartha. He found the snake curled up under the kitchen sink where the hot-water pipe fed into the faucet and dishwasher, but it was all but inanimate, as cold and slick as a garden hose left out in the frost.

It was surprisingly heavy, especially for an animal that hadn't eaten in the two weeks it had been in the house, but he dragged it, stiff and frigid, from its *cachette* and laid it before the fireplace. While he was making coffee in the kitchen, he gazed out the window on the tumble of the day and thought of all those years that he'd gone to work in weather like this, in all weathers, actually, and felt a stab of nostalgia. Maybe he should go back to work—if not in his old capacity, from which he was gratefully retired, then on a part-time basis, just to keep his hand in, just to get out of the house and do something useful. On impulse he picked up the phone, thinking to call Alex, his old boss, and sound him out, but the line was down, too.

Back in the living room, he sank into the couch with his coffee and watched the snake as it came slowly back to itself, its muscles shivering in slow waves from head to tail, like a soft breeze trailing over a still body of water. By the time he'd had a second cup of coffee and fixed himself an egg on the gas range, the crisis—if that was what it was—had passed. Siddhartha seemed fine. He never moved much even in the best of times, with the heat on high and the electric blanket that Gerard had bought for him draped across the big Plexiglas terrarium he liked to curl up in, so it was difficult to say. Gerard sat there a long while, stoking the fire, watching the snake unfurl its muscles and flick the dark fork of its tongue, until a thought came to him: Maybe Siddhartha was hungry. When Gerard had asked the pet-shop proprietor what to feed him, Bozeman had answered, "Rats." Gerard must have looked dubious, because the man had added, "Oh, I mean, you can give him rabbits when he gets bigger, and that's a savings, really, in time and energy, because you won't have to feed him as often, but you'd be surprised—snakes, reptiles in general, are a lot more efficient than we are. They don't have to stoke the internal furnace all the time with filet mignon and hot-fudge sundaes, and they don't need clothes or fur coats, either." He paused to gaze down at the snake, where it lay in its terrarium, basking under a heat lamp. "I just fed this guy his rat yesterday. You shouldn't have to give him anything for a week or two, anyway. He'll let you know."

"How?" Gerard had asked.

A shrug. "Could be a color thing, where you notice his pattern isn't as bright, maybe. Or he's just, I don't know, what you'd call lethargic."

They'd both looked down at the snake then, its eyes like two pebbles, its body all but indistinguishable from the length of rough wood it was stretched out on. It was no more animate than the glass walls of the terrarium, and Gerard wondered how anyone, even an expert, could tell if the thing was alive or dead. Then he wrote the check.

But now he found himself chafing at an idea: the snake needed to be fed. Of course it did. It had been two weeks—why hadn't he thought of it before? He was neglecting the animal, and that wasn't right. He got up from the couch to close off the room and build up the fire, then went out to shovel the driveway and take the car down the long, winding community road to the highway and on into Newhouse and the mall. It was a harrowing journey. Trucks threw blankets of slush over the windshield, and the beating of the wipers made him dizzy. When he arrived, he was relieved to see that the mall had electricity, the whole place lit up like a Las Vegas parade for the marketing and selling of all things Christmas, and with a little deft maneuvering he was able to wedge his car between a plowed drift and the handicapped space in front of the pet store.

Inside, Pets & Company smelled of nature in the raw, every creature in every cage and glassed-in compartment having defecated simultaneously, just to greet him, or so he imagined. The place was superheated. He was the only customer. Bozeman was up on a footstool, cleaning one of the aquariums with a vacuum tube. "Hey, man," he said, his voice a high singsong. "Gerard, right? Don't tell me." He reached back in a practiced gesture to smooth down his ponytail, as if he were petting a cat or a ferret. "You need a rat. Am I right?"

The rat—he didn't see it; Bozeman had gone into the back room to fetch it—came in a cardboard container with a molded carrying handle on top, the sort of thing you got if you asked for a doggie bag at a restaurant. The animal was heavier than Gerard had expected, shifting its weight mysteriously from one corner of the box to another as he carried it out into the snow and set it on the seat beside him. He turned on the fan after he'd started up the engine, to give it some heat—but then it was a mammal, he figured, with fur, and it could warm itself. And, in any case, it was dinner, or soon to be. The roads were slick. Visibility was practically zero. He crawled behind a snowplow all the way back to Newhouse Gardens, and when he came in the door he was pleased to see that the fire was still going strong.

All right. He set down the box and then dragged the python's terrarium across the floor from the bedroom to the living room and set it to one side of the fireplace. Then he lifted the snake—it was noticeably warm to the touch on the side that had been closest to the fire—and laid it gently in the terrarium. For a moment, it came to life, the long run of muscles tensing, the great flat slab of the head gearing around to regard him out of its stony eyes, and then it was inert again, dead weight against the Plexiglas floor. Gerard bent cautiously to the rat's box—would it spring out, bite him, then scurry away across the floor to live behind the baseboard forever, like some cartoon incarnation?—and, with his heart pounding, lowered the box into the terrarium and opened the lid.

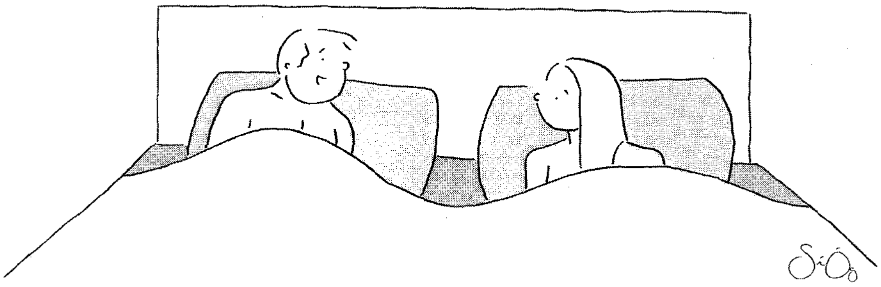
The rat—it was white, with pink eyes, like the lab rats he'd seen arrayed in their cages in the biology building when he was a student—slid from the box like a lump of gristle, then sat up on its haunches and began cleaning itself, as if it were the most natural thing in the world to be transported in a doggie bag and dumped into a glass-walled cavern in the presence of a tongue-flicking reptile. Which might or might not be hungry.

For a long while, nothing happened. Snow ticked at the windows, the fire sparked and settled. And then the snake moved ever so slightly, the faintest shifting of the bright tube of its scales, energy percolating from the deepest core of its musculature, and suddenly the rat stiffened. All at once it was aware of the danger it was in. It seemed to shrink into itself, as if by doing so it could somehow become invisible. Gerard watched, fascinated, wondering how the rat—reared in some drowsy pet warehouse, slick and pink and suckling at its mother's teats in a warm gregarious pack of its pink siblings, generations removed from the wild and any knowledge of a thing like this snake and its shining elongate bulk—could recognize the threat. Very slowly, by almost imperceptible degrees, the snake lifted its head from the Plexiglas floor, levelling on the rat like a sculpture come to life. Then it struck, so quickly that Gerard nearly missed it, but the rat, as if it had trained all its life for just this moment, was equal to it. It sprang over the snake's head in a single frantic leap and shot to the farthest corner of the terrarium, where it began to emit a series of birdlike cries, all the while fastening its inflamed eyes on the white hovering face of Gerard. And what did he feel? He felt like a god, like a Roman emperor with the power of fatality in his thumb. The rat scrabbled at the Plexiglas. The snake shifted to close in on it.

And then, because he was a god, Gerard reached into the terrarium and lifted the rat up out of the range of his python. He was surprised at how warm the animal was, and how quickly it accommodated itself to his hand. It didn't struggle or try to escape but simply pressed itself against his wrist and the trailing sleeve of his sweater as if it understood, as if it were grateful. In the next moment he was cradling the rat against his chest, the pulse of its heart already slowing. He went to the couch and sank into it, uncertain what to do next. The rat gazed up at him, shivered the length of its body, and promptly fell asleep.

The situation was novel, to say the least. Gerard had never touched a rat in his life, let alone allowed one to curl up and sleep in the weave of his sweater. He watched its miniature chest rise and fall, studied the intricacy of its naked feet that were like hands, saw the spray of etiolated whiskers, and felt the suppleness of the tail as it lay between his fingers like the suède fringe of the jacket he'd worn as a boy. The fire faltered, but he didn't rise to feed it. When finally he got up to open a can of soup, the rat came with him, awake now and discovering its natural perch on his shoulder. He felt its fur like a caress on the side of his neck, and then the touch of its whiskers and fevered nose. It stood on its hind legs and stretched from Gerard's lap to the edge of the table as he spooned up his soup by candlelight, and he couldn't resist the experiment of extracting a cube of potato from the rich golden broth and feeding it into the eager, mincing mouth. And then another. And another. When he went to bed, the rat came with him, and if he woke in the dark of the night—and he did, twice, three times—he felt its presence beside him, its spirit, its heart, its heat, and it was no reptile, no cold thankless thing with a flicking tongue and two dead eyes, but a creature radiant with life.

The house was very cold when he woke to the seeping light of morning. He sat up



"What should we have sex about?"

in bed and looked around him. The face of the clock radio was blank, so the electricity must still have been down. He wondered about that, but when he pushed himself up and set his bare feet on the floor it was the rat he was thinking about—and there it was, nestled in a fold of the blankets. It opened its eyes, stretched, and then climbed into the palm he offered it, working its way up inside the sleeve of his pajamas until it was balanced on his shoulder again. In the kitchen, he turned on all four gas burners and the oven, too, and shut off the room to trap the heat. It wasn't until the kettle began to boil that he thought about the fireplace—and the snake stretched out in its terrarium—but by then it was too late.

He returned to the pet store that afternoon, reasoning that he might as well convert the snake's lair into a rat's nest. Or no, that didn't sound right—that was what his mother used to call his boyhood room. He'd call it a rat apartment. A rat hostel. A rat— Bozeman grinned when he saw him. "Not another rat?" he said, something quizzical in his eyes. "He can't want another one already, can he? But then with Burms you've got to watch for obesity—they'll eat anytime, whether they're hungry or not."

Even under the best of conditions, Gerard was not the sort to confide in people he barely knew. "Yes" was all he said, in answer to both questions. And then he added, "I may as well take a couple of them while I'm here." He looked away. "To save me the trip."

Bozeman wiped his hands on the khaki apron he wore over his jeans and came out from behind the cash register. "Sure," he said. "Good idea. How many you want? They're five ninety-nine each."

Gerard shrugged. He thought of the rat at home, the snugness of it, the way it sprang across the carpet in a series of little leaps or shot along the baseboard as if blown by a hurricane wind, how it would take a nut in its hands and sit up to gnaw at it, how it loved to play with anything he gave it—a paper clip, an eraser, the ridged plastic top of an Evian bottle. In a moment of inspiration, he decided to call it Robbie, after his brother in Tulsa. Robbie. Robbie the Rat. And Robbie needed company, needed playmates, just like any other creature. Before he could think, he said, "Ten?"

"Ten? Whoa, man, that is going to be one fat snake."

"Is that too many?"

Bozeman slicked back his ponytail and gave him a good, long look. "Hell, no—I mean, I'll sell you all I've got if that's what you want, and everything else, too. You want gerbils? Parakeets? Albino toads? I'm in business, you know—pets for sale. This is a pet shop, *comprende*? But I tell you, if that Burm doesn't eat them P.D.Q., you're going to see how fast these things breed. . . . I mean, the females can go into heat, or whatever you want to call it, at five weeks old. Five weeks." He shifted his weight and moved past Gerard, gesturing for him to follow. They stopped in front of a display of packaged food and bright-colored sacks of litter. "You're going to want Rat Chow," he said, handing him a ten-pound sack, "and a bag or two of these wood shavings." Another look. "You got a place to keep them?"

By the time he left the store, Gerard had two wire cages (with cedar-plank flooring so the rats wouldn't contract bumblefoot, whatever that was), twenty pounds of rat food, three bags of litter, and two super-sized doggie bags with five rats in each. Then he was home and shutting the door to keep out the cold even as Robbie, emerging from beneath the pillows of the couch, humped across the floor to greet him and all the lights flashed on simultaneously.

It was mid-April by the time my wife and I returned from Switzerland. Tim and Tim II, who'd been cared for in our absence by our housekeeper, Florencia, were there to greet us, acting out their ecstasy on the doorstep and then carrying it into the living room with such an excess of animation that it was all but impossible to get our bags in the door before giving them their treats, a thorough back-scratching, and a cooed rehearsal of the little endearments they were used to. It was good to be home, back to a real community, after all that time spent living in a sterile apartment in Basel, and, what with making the rounds of the neighbors and settling in both at home and at work, it wasn't till some weeks later that I thought of Gerard. No one had seen him, save for Mary Martinson, who'd run into him in the parking lot at the mall, and he'd refused all invitations to dinner, casual get-togethers, ice-skating on the lake, even the annual Rites of Spring fund-raiser at the clubhouse. Mary said that he'd seemed distracted and that she'd tried to engage him in conversation, thinking he was still locked in that first stage of grieving and just needed a little nudge to get him on track again, but he'd been abrupt with her. And she didn't like to mention it but he was unkempt—and he smelled worse than ever. It was startling, she said. Even outdoors, standing over the open trunk of his car, which was entirely filled, she couldn't help noticing, with something called Rat Chow, even with the wind blowing and a lingering chill in the air, he gave off a powerful reek of sadness and body odor. Someone needed to look in on him, that was her opinion.

I waited till the weekend, and then, as I'd done back in December, I took the dogs down the wide, amicable streets, through the greening woods, and over the rise to Gerard's cottage. The day was glorious, the sun climbing toward its zenith, moths and butterflies spangling the flower gardens, the breeze sweetened with a scent of the South. My neighbors slowed their cars to wave as they passed, and a few people stopped to chat, their engines rumbling idly. Carolyn Porterhouse thrust a bouquet of tulips at me and a mysterious wedge-shaped package wrapped in butcher paper, which proved to be an Emmentaler—"Welcome home," she said, her grin anchored by a layer of magenta lipstick—and Ed Saperstein stopped right in the middle of the road to tell me about a trip to the Bahamas that he and his wife had taken on a chartered yacht. It was past one by the time I got to Gerard's.

I noticed right off that not much had changed. The windows were streaked with dirt, and the yard, sprouting weeds along the margins of the unmowed lawn, looked as neglected as ever. The dogs bolted off after something in the deep grass, and I shifted the bouquet under one arm, figuring I'd hand it to Gerard, to cheer him up a bit, and rang the bell. There was no answer. I tried a second time, then made my way along the side of the house, thinking to peer in the windows—for all anyone knew, he could be ill, or even, God forbid, dead.

The windows were nearly opaque, with a scrim of some sort of pale fluff or dander. I rapped at the glass and thought I saw movement within, a kaleidoscopic shifting of shadowy forms, but couldn't be sure. It was then that I noticed the odor, saturated and bottom-heavy with ammonia, like the smell of a poorly run kennel. I mounted the back steps through a heavy accounting of discarded microwave-dinner trays and a tidal drift of feed bags and knocked uselessly at the door. The wind stirred. I looked down at the refuse at my feet and saw the legend "Rat Chow" replicated over and over in neon-orange letters, and that should have been all the information I needed. Yet how was I to guess? How was anyone?

Later, after I'd presented the bouquet and the cheese to my wife, I tried Gerard's phone and, to my surprise, he answered on the fourth or fifth ring. "Hello, Gerard," I said, trying to work as much heartiness into my voice as I could. "It's me, Roger, back from the embrace of the Swiss. I stopped by today to say hello, but—"

He cut me off then, his voice husky and low, almost a whisper. "Yes, I know," he said. "Robbie told me."

If I wondered who Robbie was—a roommate? a female?—I didn't linger over it. "Well," I said, "how're things? Looking up?" He didn't answer. I listened to the sound of his breathing for a moment, then added, "Would you like to get together? Maybe come over for dinner?"

There was another long pause. Finally, he said, "I can't do that."

I wasn't going to let him off so lightly. We were friends. I had a responsibility. We lived in a community where people cared about one another and where the loss of a single individual was a loss to us all. I tried to inject a little jocularity into my voice: "Well, why not? Too far to travel? I'll grill you a nice steak and open a bottle of Côtes du Rhône."

"Too busy," he said. And then he said something I couldn't quite get hold of at the time. "It's nature," he said. "The force of nature."

"What are you talking about?"

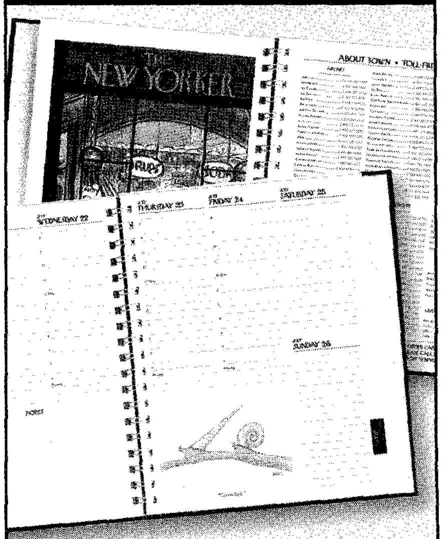
"I'm overwhelmed," he said, so softly that I could barely hear him, and then his breathing trailed off and the phone went dead.

They found him a week later. The next-door neighbors, Paul and Peggy Bartlett, noticed the smell, which seemed to intensify as the days went on, and when there was no answer at the door they called the Fire Department. I'm told that when the firemen broke down the front door a sea of rodents flooded out into the yard, fleeing in every direction. Inside, the floors were gummy with waste, and everything, from the furniture to the plasterboard walls and the oak beams of the living-room ceiling, had been gnawed and whittled till the place was all but unrecognizable. In addition to the free-roaming animals, there were hundreds more rats stacked in cages, most of them starving and many cannibalized or displaying truncated limbs. A spokeswoman for the local A.S.P.C.A. estimated that there were upward of thirteen hundred rats in the house, most of which had to be euthanized at the shelter because they were in no condition to be sent out for adoption.

As for Gerard, he'd apparently succumbed to pneumonia, though there were rumors of hantavirus, which really put a chill into the community, especially with so many of the rodents still at large. We all felt bad for him, of course, I more than anyone else. If only I'd been home through the winter, I kept thinking, if only I'd persisted when I'd stood outside his window and caught the odor of decay, perhaps I could have saved him. But then I kept coming back to the idea that there must have been some deep character flaw in him that none of us had recognized—he'd chosen a snake for a pet, for God's sake, and that low animal had somehow morphed into this horde of creatures that could only be described as pests, as vermin, as enemies of mankind that should be exterminated, not nurtured. And that was another thing that neither my wife nor I could understand: how could he allow even a single one of them to come near him, to fall under the caress of his hand, to sleep with him, eat with him, breathe the same air?

For the first two nights, I could barely sleep, playing over that horrific scene in my mind. How could Gerard have sunk so far? How could anyone?

The ceremony was brief, the casket closed (and there wasn't one of us who wanted to speculate on the reason, though it didn't take an especially active imagination to picture Gerard's final moments). I was very tender with my wife afterward. We went out to lunch with some of the others, and when we got home I pressed her to me and held her for a long while. And though I was exhausted, I took the dogs out on the lawn to throw them their ball and watch the way the sun struck their rollicking fur as they streaked after the rumor of it, only to bring it back, again and again, and lay it in my palm, still warm from the embrace of their jaws. ♦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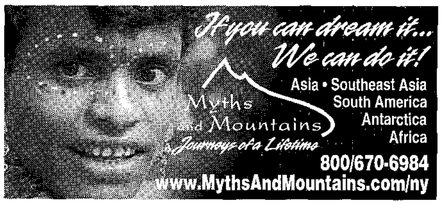
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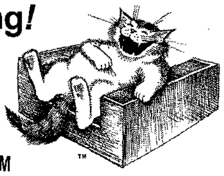
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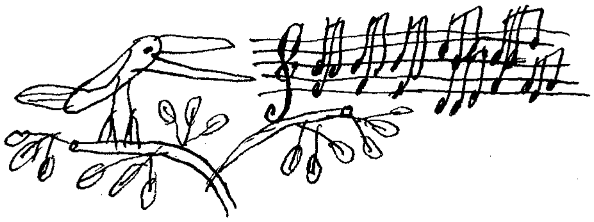


A CRITIC ABROAD

SYMPHONY OF MILLIONS

Taking stock of the Chinese music boom.

BY ALEX ROSS

In March, Chen Qigang, a Chinese composer who is supervising the music program for the opening ceremony of the 2008 Summer Olympics, received a National Spirit Achievers Award at a press event in Beijing. He was one of ten artists and businesspeople to receive the prize, which came courtesy of the Chinese magazine *Life* and of Mercedes-AMG, the high-performance-vehicle division of Mercedes-Benz. The award ceremony, typical of modern China in its mixture of nationalist bombast, materialist excess, and cultural bizarrerie, took place in the 798 art zone—a cavernous factory complex that has been converted into exhibition space. Four AMG vehicles were on display, surrounded by models clad in silver-lamé outfits, in presumably inadvertent homage to "Goldfinger." Projected on the walls and the ceiling of the factory were the words "Will," "Power," and "Dream," with Chinese characters to match. "We believe that Mercedes-AMG will infuse powerful new vigor into China's national car culture," Klaus Maier, the head of Mercedes-Benz China, said. Chen stood to one side, a quizzical expression on his face. Before the ceremony began, he had said to me, "I have no idea what is happening."

While classical musicians around the world fight for a glimmer of media attention, their counterparts in China have no trouble drawing the spotlight. Western classical music is big business, or, at least, official business. Chen Qigang, a mild-mannered fifty-two-year-old whose works elegantly fuse Western-modernist and traditional Chinese elements, was reminded of this last year, when he moved from Paris, where he had resided since 1984, back to Beijing, where he had lived during the Cultural Revolution. In a conversation at his Beijing apartment, he recalled the world of his youth as a repressed, violent place, where classical music was forbidden. Then, in Paris, he had grown accustomed to a culture in which the same small cohort of connoisseurs attended new-music concerts night after night. On a visit to Beijing last year, Chen was summoned to meet the film director Zhang Yimou, who made "Hero" and "House of Flying Daggers," and who is in charge of the Olympic ceremonies. Zhang inquired if Chen had any "free time" in 2008. The next day, the composer met with Olympic officials, who asked him to cancel future plans. Chen agreed, and accepted an offer to run the music program, not only because he felt official pressure but because he relished the challenge of directing a retinue of fifty composers, from both classical and popular genres, to entertain a global audience. In America, he noted, no classical composer would be given such a task.

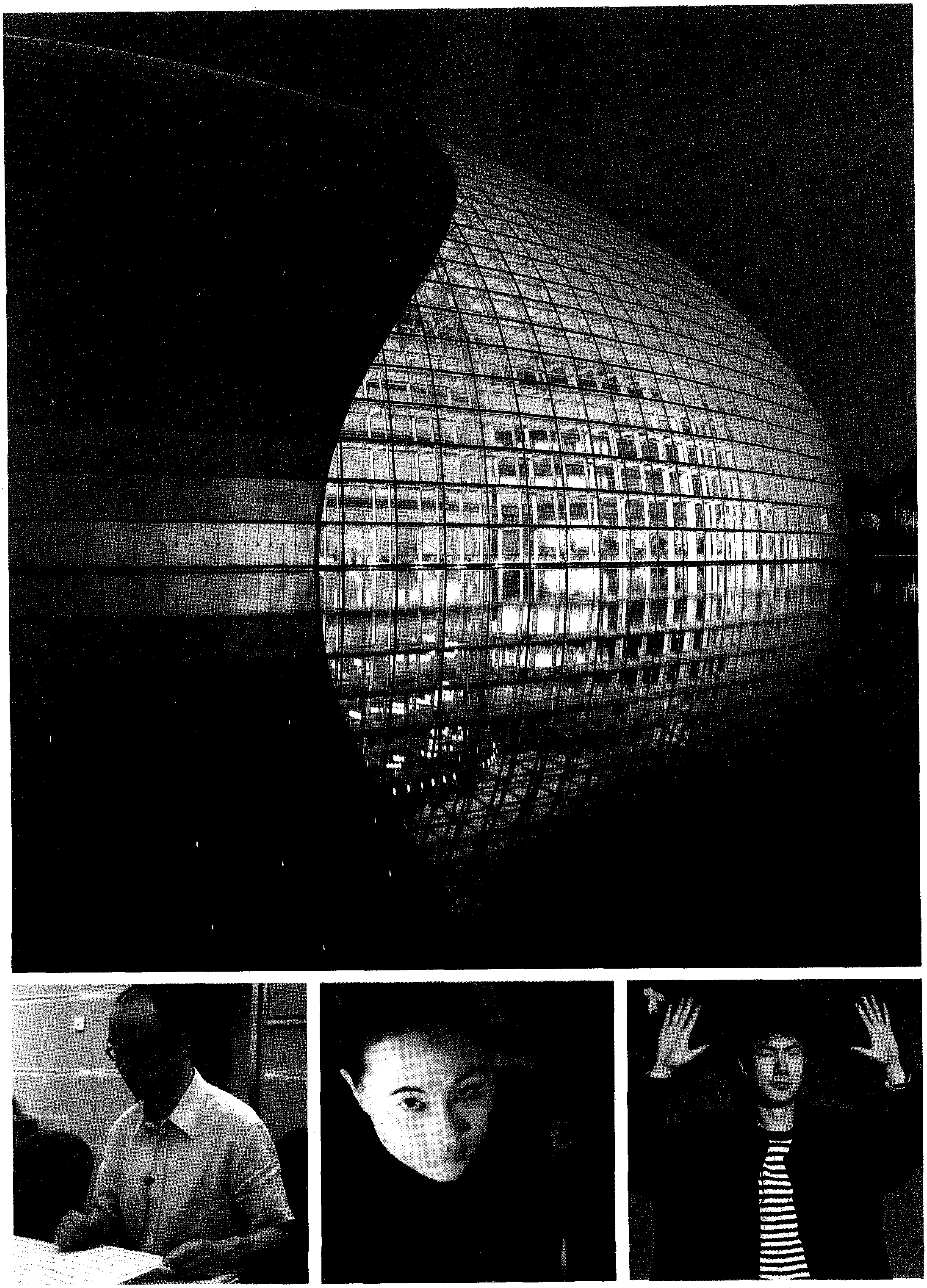
"For the past fifteen or twenty years, classical music has been very à la mode in China," Chen told me, in French. "The halls are full. There are many students. There might also be some difficulties. But there is a very powerful phenomenon at work in the education system. When I visited my old primary school, I found that, out of a class of forty students, thirty-six were studying piano. This points to the future."

Western musicians, administrators, and critics who visit China have lately come away murmuring observations along the lines of "classical music is exploding" and "the future of classical music lies in China." Between thirty million and a hundred million children are said to be learning piano, violin, or both, depending on which source you consult. When the New York Philharmonic was in Beijing last February, on the eve of its heralded visit to North Korea, the Associated Press offered this summary of a press conference given by Lorin Maazel: "Facing dwindling popularity in the West, classical music could receive a boost from a large Chinese population that is increasingly interested in other cultures, the music director of the New York Philharmonic said." Chinese virtuosos and composers crowd New York halls. In April, the Philharmonic presented the première of Tan Dun's Piano Concerto, with Lang Lang as the soloist; shortly afterward, the Metropolitan Opera revived Tan's 2006 opera, "The First Emperor," with Plácido Domingo in the title role.

After a recent visit to Beijing, I had some doubts about China's putative lock on the musical future. Concert halls may be full and conservatories mobbed, but classical music is hobbled by commercial and political pressures. The creative climate, with its system of punishments and rewards, still resembles that of the late-period Soviet Union, which heavily influenced the development of China's musical institutions. At the same time, the wider soundscape of Beijing is as chaotically rich as that of any Western city: nights of experimental music, indie-rock shows soaked in hipster attitude, pop idols cavorting on HD monitors in malls, retirees singing Peking opera in parks. In the "Li Chi," or "Book of Rites," it is written, "The music of a well-ruled state is peaceful and joyous . . . that of a country in confusion is full of resentment . . . and that of a dying country is mournful and pensive." All three kinds of music, together with others that might well have confounded Confucian scholars, intersect in the People's Republic.

The most outwardly impressive symbol of China's musical ambition is the National Center for the Performing Arts, a colossal, low-slung, titanium-clad dome west of Tiananmen Square.

ABOVE: BENOÎT JACQUES; OPPOSITE: TOP: MICHAEL WEBER/ESTO; FROM LEFT: YANG ZHEN, WANG LIANG, MATTHEW NIEDERHAUSER



Top: the Egg, Beijing's performing-arts center. Bottom: composer Chen Qigang; guqin player Wu Na; guitarist Jeffray Zhang.

Representations of the well-ruled state surround it: the Great Hall of the People is next door, and Zhongnanhai, the Party-leadership compound, lies across the avenue. An inscription above the center's entrance bears the signature of Jiang Zemin, who was China's President from 1993 to 2003, and made a show of admiring classical music. (After the death of Deng Xiaoping, Jiang told the press that he had consoled himself by listening to Mozart's Requiem through the night.) The president of the center, which Beijingers call the Egg, is a local potentate named Chen Ping, who has developed deluxe shopping malls in the eastern part of the city. The complex was originally scheduled to open in 2004, but Paul Andreu, the architect, had to reëvaluate the design after another of his projects, a terminal at Charles de Gaulle International Airport, partially collapsed. At the opening, which finally took place at the end of last year, Chen Ping described the building as a "concrete example of China's rising soft power."

As architecture, the building may live up to its pompous billing, but, as a place for music, the Egg is problematic. There are two main halls: the opera house, which seats twenty-four hundred, and the concert hall, which seats two thousand. The concert hall has reasonably clear acoustics but lacks warmth. In the top gallery of the opera house, where the sound should be best, the orchestra comes across as tinny and colorless. There is little evidence that musical considerations played a role in the design. No serious acoustician would have approved the halls' pockets of extra space, where sound bounces around and gets lost.

The performances themselves suffered in comparison with what you hear on even a so-so night in New York. They showed the inevitable limitations of a classical culture that is less than a century old and has been periodically roiled by political upheaval. China's music-education system may yield notable soloists, but it has yet to develop the breadth of talent and the collaborative mentality that engender great orchestras. Strings are generally polished; winds and brass threaten to puncture the ears. On my first visit to the Egg, I saw a production of "Turandot" featuring the orchestra and the chorus of the Shanghai Opera House. The trumpets let out a piercing flubbed note in the first bar, and many misadventures followed; at times, it sounded as though a civic orchestra had been augmented by members of a high-school marching band. Yet the raucousness was oddly arresting. The idea of the production was to reclaim Puccini's Italianized, Romanticized fantasy of imperial China; Chen Xinyi, the director, emulated the values of traditional Chinese theatre, and the composer Hao Weiya supplied a fluid if somewhat watery ending for the opera, which Puccini left unfinished at his death. In that sense, the rawness of the sound added to the effect, though it wasn't an experience I'd want to repeat.

Near-capacity crowds attended "Turandot" and other events I saw at the Egg. This was impressive, considering the cost of the tickets; for a seat in the uppermost gallery of the opera house, I paid four hundred and eighty yuan—about seventy dollars. That price is considerably higher than for an equivalent seat at the Metropolitan Opera, and vertiginously high when you consider that a low-level white-collar worker at a Chinese firm earns only about four hundred dollars a month. But not everyone has to pay to get in. Large blocks of tickets are set aside for politicians, diplomats, C.E.O.s, and corporate clients; some fail to show up, resulting in rows of empty seats at allegedly sold-out events, and others make an early exit to attend another function or to escape boredom. One Beijing composer told me scornfully that much of the audience was "scouting real estate," and that it would disappear once its curiosity had been satisfied.

It was encouraging, however, to see so many young people in the house—many more than you see on an average night at the Met or the New York Philharmonic. At a performance by the China National Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Michel Plasson, I watched as a cluster of teen-agers, outfitted with bejewelled BlackBerrys, A.P.C. jeans, and other tokens of new wealth, grew excited by the orchestra's noisily energetic rendition of Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique," leaving aside their text-messaging to applaud each movement. In general, listeners behaved more informally than I was used to: some older people, following the looser etiquette of Peking opera, talked among themselves, pointed at the stage, or read newspapers. The hubbub was distracting at times—ushers largely failed to prevent the taking of pictures and videos—but it was refreshing in comparison with the self-conscious solemnity that encroaches on Western concert halls. The music wasn't taken for granted; Berlioz still had shock value.

"We need to start seeing other news sources."

The youthfulness of the audience at the Egg reflects the real wonder of the Chinese classical scene: the staggering number of people who are currently studying music, whether in schools or with private tutors. The Sichuan Conservatory, in Chengdu, is said to have more than ten thousand students; Juilliard, by contrast, has eight hundred. An American high-school student who practices piano several hours a day is apt to be pegged something of a freak; in China, such a routine is commonplace.

The violist Qi Yue, a young professor at Renmin University, explained to me the various factors that are driving the surge in music lessons. For one thing, students who demonstrate musical gifts can get away with scoring fewer points on the *gaokao*, China's college-admissions test, not unlike athletes in the United States. Also, the conservatory system has a history of fostering pop stars, who prompt legions of imitators. Cui Jian, the founder of Chinese rock, played trumpet in the Beijing Symphony in the nineteen-eighties before embarking on a pop career. The Sichuan Conservatory famously produced the pop singer Li Yuchun, who, in 2005, entered as a contestant on "Super Girl," a Chinese version of "American Idol," and won the competition with a hip-hop-flavored, gender-bending style. (With hundreds of millions of votes cast in the form of text messages, "Super Girl" has been called China's largest democratic election. Perhaps for this reason, the show was cancelled after the 2006 season.)

Qi took me on a tour of the Central Conservatory, China's flagship music school, in the company of his former teacher, the violist Wing Ho. Familiar airs wafted out of the practice rooms—Chopin from the pianists, Rossini from the singers, Tchaikovsky from the violinists. When I looked in on a composition class, though, it turned out to be a lesson in pop-music arranging. A shaggy-haired, T-shirt-clad student named Zhang Tianye was leaning over a computer terminal, working on a mix of drums, guitar, piano, and bass. When I asked him what music he likes, he said he listened "mostly to pop, sometimes classical." Another student, Qu Dawei, sat down at the piano to execute a half-Romantic, half-jazzy solo somewhat in the manner of Gershwin. In other words, attending a conservatory in China doesn't automatically equate with interest in classical music. Yet the intermingling of genres may have the healthy effect of integrating European tradition into the wider culture.

Like most serious Chinese musicians, Qi Yue politely rejected the notion of China as a classical paradise, although he predicted that it would become a major market in twenty or thirty years. Long Yu, China's most prominent conductor, felt much the same way. "On the outside, newspapers are saying that China is the largest musical country in the world, or that millions of kids are learning piano," he told me. "I'm not that optimistic. The thing is, I do my best to serve the people who really need fine arts and classical music. I do not have the duty to make everyone like it." A German-trained musician who operates with a kind of bulldozer charm, Long Yu directs the Beijing Music Festival, has built the China Philharmonic into China's finest orchestra, and holds posts in Guangzhou and Shanghai. To maintain political connections, he serves on the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Nonetheless, he keeps a certain distance from the notion of classical music as "official culture"; he has sought funding from private sources and tried to keep ticket prices down. Notably, he has yet to appear at the Egg.

For a musician on Long Yu's level, politics is unavoidable. Since the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, the Party has discouraged dissent not just by clamping down on rebellious voices but by handsomely rewarding those who play it safe. Richard Kraus, in his book "The Party and the Arty in China," writes, "By 1992, the Party had given up trying to purge all dissident voices and opted instead for the strategy of urging all arts organizations to strive to earn more money." Those who work within the system may be expected to reach a stage where they can win prizes, obtain sinecures, hold illustrious posts, and be well paid for teaching. Artists end up censoring themselves—a habit ingrained in Chinese history. Behind the industrious façade is a fair degree of political anxiety. Reviews often read like press releases; indeed, I was told that concert organizations routinely pay journalists to provide favorable coverage. Critics feel pressure to deliver positive judgments, and, if they don't, they may be reprimanded or hounded by colleagues. One critic I talked to got fed up and quit writing about music altogether.

"If you are not free yourself, how can you interpret music freely?" the former music critic told me. We met in the lobby of the Grand Hyatt Beijing, above Oriental Plaza, the most opulent of Chen Ping's malls. Businesspeople negotiated deals at neighboring tables while Norah Jones cooed on the speakers. "It's very sad," the critic went on. "Freedom is the biggest thing and it affects everything. People are scared, and they act in a way that scares others. I'm not just talking about music; I'm talking about many professions. There is a lot more to say, and sometimes I don't know where to begin. Many things are stuck in my head."

Western music formally arrived in China in 1601, when the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci presented a clavichord to Wanli, the longest-ruling of the Ming emperors. As Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai relate, in their absorbing book "Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese," the Emperor's eunuchs experimented with the instrument for a little while and then set it aside. It stayed undisturbed in a box for several decades, until Chongzhen, the last of the Ming rulers, discovered it and sought out a German Jesuit priest to explain its workings. Of succeeding emperors, Kangxi and Qianlong showed the most enthusiasm for Western music; the latter, who ruled China for the better part of the eighteenth century, at one point assembled a full-scale chamber orchestra, with the eunuchs dressed in European suits and wigs.

Only in the nineteenth century did Western music really spread beyond the walls of the imperial palaces, often in the form of military and municipal bands. The first true orchestra was the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra (later the Shanghai Symphony), which began playing in 1919, under the direction of an expatriate Italian virtuoso named Mario Paci. At first, the orchestra had only foreign players and stayed within the bounds of Shanghai's colonial settlements, but Paci eventually reached out to the Chinese population. In 1927, Xiao Youmei, a German-trained pianist and composer, founded the Shanghai Conservatory, the first Western-style music school on Chinese soil. The growth of the Shanghai musical scene profited from a lively community of adventurers, exiles, and, with the rise of Nazism, German-Jewish refugees; on the faculty of the Shanghai Conservatory were associates of Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg.

Mao Zedong, on assuming power, in 1949, initially encouraged the imported music, although he kept it within strict ideological bounds. In the library of the

Central Conservatory, I looked at back issues of *People's Music*, a house journal whose first issue appeared in 1950, the year that the conservatory was founded. There were lyrics for songs called "We Are Busy Producing" and "The Little Song of Handing in Your Grains." Each article, my companions pointed out, began with an automatic spasm of revolutionary rhetoric: "Our musical workers must develop people's musical activities with limitless zeal." Nonetheless, composers made fitful attempts to modernize their art, especially during the Hundred Flowers period, when Mao permitted them to "apply appropriate foreign principles and use foreign musical instruments."

The onset of the Cultural Revolution, in 1966, effectively shut down the Central Conservatory. Western classical music was pushed out, along with most of the native traditions from the imperial era. To replace the extant repertory, Jiang Qing, otherwise known as Madame Mao, commissioned a group of eight "model" scores on revolutionary topics. The most famous of these was the ballet "Red Detachment of Women," which has a kitschily charming score in a light-classical vein, with an array of native-Chinese sounds. Composers had to work within the often peculiar stylistic boundaries that Jiang Qing set up; on one occasion, she extolled Aaron Copland's film score for "The Red Pony," and another time she outlawed the tuba.

The operatic bass Hao Jiang Tian, who, while I was in Beijing, was singing the role of Timur in "Turandot," described to me what it was like to study music amid the delirium of the Cultural Revolution. His first musical performances were as an accordionist and singer in the Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Team of the Beijing Boiler Factory. (He relates these experiences in an engaging memoir, "Along the Roaring River.") Tian's father and mother worked for the People's Liberation Army Zhongzheng Song and Dance Ensemble, as conductor and composer, respectively, but they came under suspicion and eventually had to leave Beijing. One day, Tian's father said that the family had to get rid of its record collection. With a shudder, Tian remembers the childish glee that he felt as he smashed the albums.

After the death of Mao and the fall of Jiang Qing, classical musicians emerged from hiding. When the Central Conservatory reopened, in 1978, eighteen thousand people applied for a hundred places. Present in that first class was a group of composers who define contemporary Chinese music today: Tan Dun, Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Chen Qigang, and Guo Wenjing. Under the guidance of various visiting mentors—among them the expatriate modernist Chou Wen-chung, who had gone to America in 1946 and later taken a position at Columbia University—these composers Westernized themselves at high speed, consuming serialism, chance procedures, and other novelties. In so doing, they came up with fresh and vital combinations of sounds, especially when they added to the mix the clear-cut melodies and jangling timbres of traditional Chinese music. Almost all the students had been forced to perform manual labor or study folk music in the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, and they arrived at the school with a strong grasp of Chinese heritage.

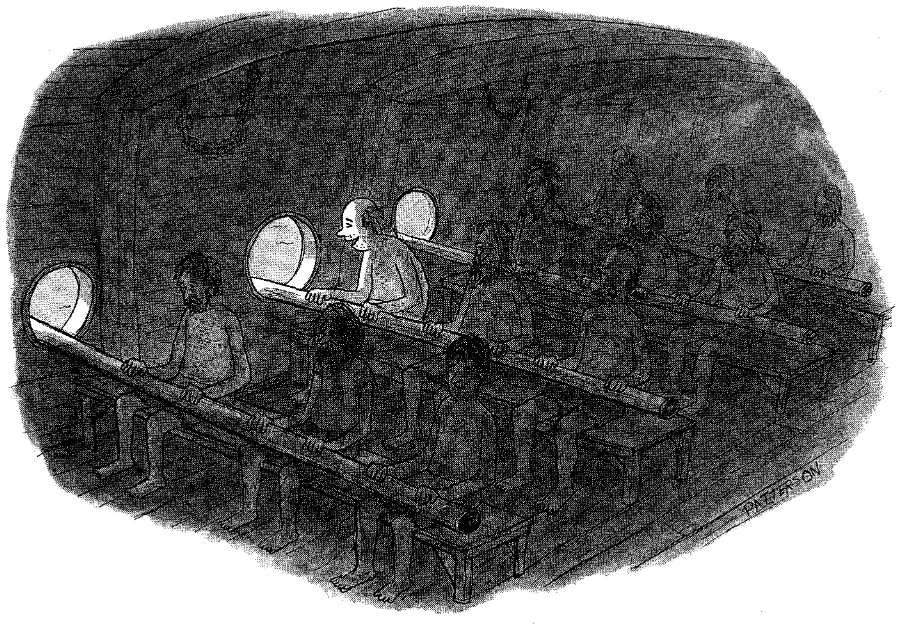
A diaspora followed. Chen Qigang went to Paris to study with Olivier Messiaen. Tan Dun, Chen Yi, and Zhou Long travelled to New York to work with Chou Wen-chung; all three took up residence in the city. Tan quickly gravitated to New York's downtown scene, particularly to the world of John Cage. By combining Cage's chance processes and natural noises with plush Romantic melodies, Tan concocted a kind of crowd-pleasing avant-gardism. In March, at the Egg, he demonstrated that sensibility with a concert of "Organic Music," with the China Youth Symphony; in "Paper Concerto" and "Water Concerto," the Japanese percussionist Haruka Fujii crinkled paper and swished water in amplified bowls and other receptacles. In a further feat of packaging, Tan relates this music to shamanistic rituals of Hunan province, where he grew up. With such deft gestures of fusion, Tan has satisfied a Western craving for authentic-seeming, folklore-based music.

Many of the '78 composers have worked to reconcile avant-garde and populist values. "In the West, our situation as composers is very sad," Chen Qigang told me. "In the nineteen-fifties, we lost command of the field, not just because popular composers took over but because we ceded the terrain. We 'developed' to the point where we no longer knew anything about the art of writing melody. We had a kind of nonexistence in musical life." Nodding to his Olympics experience, he added, "Now I understand how hard it is to compose a cheery little song." No composer has embraced that challenge as eagerly as Tan Dun, whose submission to the Olympic ceremony is a radically bathetic pop ballad entitled "One World, One Dream." Conceived in league with the songwriter and producer David Foster, Tan's song has been recorded by Andrea Bocelli, the platinum-selling crossover tenor, and Zhang Liangying, another competitor from the 2005 "Super Girl" contest. "You are me and I am you," they sing together, in English. Unfortunately, they don't go on to say, "I am the walrus."

After spending several days in the monumental environs of Tiananmen Square, I was relieved to receive an invitation to brunch at the home of Hao Jiang Tian, the singer who smashed his family's record collection, and his wife, the geneticist and pianist Martha Liao. They live in a Swiss-designed building with a superior ventilation system, which keeps Beijing's acrid air at bay. Tian and Liao also invited Guo Wenjing, who, of the composers of the 1978 generation, is the one least known in the West, principally because he never studied abroad. In some ways, he is the most interesting of all, because he has achieved a substantial degree of independence within the sometimes stifling atmosphere of Chinese music. There is a whiff of danger in his work.

Guo makes an unassuming first impression. Although he is fifty-two years old, he looks like a perpetual graduate student, his squarish face set off by heavy-rimmed glasses and a serrated edge of jet-black hair. But a certain wildness in his personality quickly emerges. He comes from Chongqing, in Sichuan province. His conversation has a slightly percussive edge, accentuated with sweeping gestures and abrupt exclamations.

At the core of Guo's work is an encyclopedic sympathy for Chinese traditional music. In the nineteen-eighties, he collected folk songs in the mountains around the upper Yangtze River. His hero was Béla Bartók, who immersed himself in Eastern European folk music in the early twentieth century and adopted its irregular rhythms and harsh effects. Guo was also drawn to Dmitri Shostakovich, master of the Soviet symphony; Guo's mature works, with their martial rhythms, flashes of biting wit, and explosive climaxes, have much in common with Shostakovich's, even if the musical material is drastically different. The eternally ambiguous Shostakovich might also have been a model for Guo while he traversed treacherous political terrain; although there are "official" pieces in Guo's catalogue, such as an overture celebrating the reabsorption of Hong Kong into China, he has also set to music the poetry of Xi Chuan, a bold and enigmatic writer who had ties to the 1989 student protests.



"Oh, look, everyone. Dolphins."

For a time, Guo chaired the composition department at the Central Conservatory. He stepped down because, he said curtly, "I didn't like it. I'm not good at multitasking." A few nights before, I had heard a choral symphony by Tang Jianping, the conservatory's current composition chair. With the help of members of the Inner Mongolian Song and Dance Ensemble, the symphony told of the life and times of Genghis Khan. It strongly resembled the pseudo-folkloristic pieces that Soviet composers dutifully produced in honor of non-Russian nationalities. This is the kind of assignment that Guo is now generally able to avoid. He still teaches, although he is discouraged by the tendency among younger Chinese composers to copy European trends in order to establish their academic bona fides. "Say there is a young composer who writes in the style of one of Jiang Qing's revolutionary operas," he said. "Today, others would criticize him because he does not sound like Luciano Berio. But I would say, 'Look, he had the guts to do something that everyone criticizes him for. There must be something good about him.' "

In fact, Guo is carrying on, with far greater subtlety, a musical idea that dominated the revolutionary years: melding Western technique with Chinese tradition. Theatre pieces such as "Wolf Cub Village" and "Poet Li Bai" and symphonic pieces like "Chou Kong Shan" ("Sorrowful, Desolate Mountain") and "Suspended Ancient Coffins on the Cliffs in Sichuan" confront listeners with gritty, grinding sonorities, battering assaults of percussion, exuberant bashings and roarings of gongs, and, in the operas, extreme vocal techniques representing extreme psychological states. If Guo strays at times on the wrong side of the divide between ritual grandeur and monotony, he invariably has a strong impact. Some lines from "Poet Li Bai," which chronicles one of the great free spirits of Taoism, seem to sum him up: "Wild and free/Like my poetry/Would I stoop before men of power,/And deny myself a pleasant hour?"

At brunch, Guo was in a sunny mood, but at one point I succeeded in annoying him. Speaking of the music of Chen Qigang, I said that its refined, free-floating timbres suggested a strong affinity between modern Chinese composition and the sound-world of Debussy and Messiaen. Guo swept his arms wide, nearly upsetting the tableware, and proclaimed, "This view shows that foreigners don't understand China. Music here has nothing to do with France. Opposite direction. Different taste." Then he smiled, his argument made. He held up two stubby fingers in the air, as if about to give a blessing. "I am anti-fashion. I look down on the trend. I want to escape the whole question of sounding like the West or sounding like the East. Non-European composers always have to have their cultural identity, their symbols. In Germany or France, they have real freedom. They absolutely have the freedom to write what they want. Of course"—his eyes lit up—"if they are so free, why do they end up sounding the same?"

If Guo Wenjing is a composer with one foot in the official world and one foot outside, Yan Jun—a thirty-five-year-old sound artist, critic, and impresario—lives an almost entirely independent existence. "It is very boring, very dangerous to life, dangerous to young people's heart and mind," Yan said of the academic and professional music worlds. "You go to school, you lose your soul. You learn how to join the official system. It's not about music." There are avant-gardists in every major city who take a similar line, although it has an extra edge coming from an artist in China. Thanks to the Internet, such musicians are less isolated than they were ten or fifteen years ago, when the concept of a Chinese avant-garde was still in its infancy. Well before I met Yan Jun, I had listened to a couple of hours of his music on his various Web sites and blogs.

Yan Jun is the genial, laid-back leader of Beijing's modestly scaled but thriving experimental-music scene. Specializing in creating electronic soundscapes from the noises and voices of the city, he releases recordings on two labels and presents music once a week at a bar called 2 Kolegas, on the grounds of a drive-in movie-theatre complex. The night I went there, the bill included Li Zenghui, a twenty-four-year-old saxophonist in a bebop getup, who delivered a breathy, growling solo; and a Japanese-Korean duo called 10, whose female lead singer alternately sang and shrieked into a microphone while sporting oversized heart-shaped sunglasses.

In his mission to cultivate a "downtown" scene comparable to New York's or Berlin's, Yan has been almost too successful. If the bar and everyone in it had been plopped down in Williamsburg, nothing would have seemed amiss. Out of a crowd of some twenty people, fewer than half were Chinese. Another night, I went to see a flock of indie-rock bands at the alternative club D-22, and found myself engulfed by moshing mobs of American college kids on their semester abroad. Yet the expatriate presence is having a dynamic effect on native musicians. The city is still cheap by Western standards, and, like Berlin after the fall of the Wall, it has become a mecca for artists in search of low rent and new audiences. The expat community includes the young American composer Eli Marshall, who leads the Beijing New Music Ensemble, and Michael Pettis, a former Wall Street investment banker, who founded D-22 in 2006.

The pride of Beijing's underground—No Beijing, Yan Jun calls it—is a twenty-two-year-old indie-rock wunderkind named Zhang Shouwang, who also goes by the name Jeffray Zhang. Pettis saw him one day in the Houhai district wearing a Velvet Underground T-shirt and struck up a conversation. Zhang turned out to be a fleet-fingered guitarist with a wide-open musical mind. Pettis gave Zhang a vintage Gibson SG electric guitar and promoted his bands and side projects, which include Carsick Cars, a locally popular group that has opened for Sonic Youth. The first night I went to D-22, Zhang performed a solo piece that featured beguiling minimalist patterns over steady drones, moving purposefully from clean, simple harmonies into duskier, more chromatic regions. In time-honored Led Zeppelin fashion, Zhang played the guitar strings with a violin bow, to which he meticulously applied rosin beforehand.

Afterward, in hesitant but idiomatic English, Zhang spoke to me about his New York-centric interests, which range from alternative rock to minimalist composers like Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and Glenn Branca. In 2006, he went to New York to participate in a recording of Branca's Symphony No. 13, for a hundred electric guitars. Recently, Zhang had been commissioned to write a piece for Marshall's Beijing New Music Ensemble. "I've never composed before, so it's going slowly," Zhang said, sipping a beer at a back table in D-22. He'd looked at an orchestration manual for clues on how to write for the instruments, but, he said, the book told him only how to pass a test. He came up with "Xizhimen Traffic Lights," a fluent, blissfully mellow study in slowly changing patterns, in the spirit of Reich.

Zhang's première took place after I left Beijing, but I later heard the piece on the Web site of the BBC, which underwrote the concert. I also recently checked Yan Jun's blog to find what sounds he has lately collected, and listened to an audio portrait of Tiananmen Square during a moment of silence in honor of victims of the Sichuan earthquake. A voice is heard saying on a loudspeaker, "It is now 2:28 P.M., Beijing time. All please stand to attention facing the flag for three minutes of silence." This being Beijing, the silence was loud. Thousands of drivers leaned on their horns to create a vast, dreamily dissonant harmony, a fundamental chord of the city.

The curious thing about the Chinese enthusiasm for Western classical music is that the People's Republic, with its far-flung provinces and myriad ethnic groups, possesses a store of musical traditions that rival in intricacy the proudest products of Europe, and go back much deeper in time. Holding to core principles in the face of change, traditional Chinese music is more "classical" than anything in the West.

In many of Beijing's public spaces, you see amateurs playing native instruments, especially the dizi, or bamboo flute, and the erhu, or two-stringed fiddle. They perform mostly for their own pleasure, not for money. But it's surprisingly difficult to find professional performances in strict classical style. In concert halls, the instruments are often deposited, as a sonic spice, into Western-style arrangements, as in the "Genghis Khan" symphony I heard at the Egg. Institutionalized "Chinese orchestras" imitate the layout of Western ensembles. Music intended for intimate spaces has been fleshed out, amplified, and transformed into spectacles suitable for national television. A colleague reports that an allegedly authentic evening of Chinese music in Shanghai ended, bafflingly, with a chunk of Mahler's Second Symphony. Those who remain devoted to the ancient traditions often struggle to show their relevance in the age of "Super Girl." Some master instrumentalists teach at the conservatories but seldom play in public. Even Peking opera, which attracts sizable crowds, feels the pressure. When, earlier this year, the Ministry of Education introduced a new program to foster interest in Peking opera among the young, a poll found that more than fifty per cent opposed the initiative as a waste of resources.

The project of revitalizing Chinese tradition has fallen to younger artists like Wu Na, who, at the age of thirty, has mastered what some consider the supreme aristocrat of instruments: the guqin, or seven-stringed zither. It is more than three thousand years old, and has a repertory that reaches back to the first millennium. Philosophers and poets from Confucius to Li Bai prided themselves on learning it. In the modern era, the guqin has become somewhat esoteric, though interest is growing again. With the support of an elderly Taiwanese couple, Wu runs a guqin school at a teahouse in Zhongshan Park, in Beijing. When I stopped by, two college students were seated at their instruments, imitating their instructor's moves. Wu herself wasn't there; she was in New York, on a fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council. After I returned home, I visited her at her temporary apartment, in Chelsea. When I walked in, she was listening to a recording of Liu Shaochun, one of the players who helped to preserve guqin tradition through the tumult of the revolution. It is music of intimate address and subtle power that is able to suggest immense spaces; skittering figures and arching melodies give way to sustained, slowly decaying tones and long, meditative pauses.

"Liu Shaochun came from a wealthy family," Wu told me. "He grew up playing guqin, practicing calligraphy, writing poetry." Then the Empire fell. "In the end, he had only his guqin. But he was still very powerful. He taught the 'give up'—you can give up everything and become very free."

Despite her fastidious attention to guqin technique, Wu also loves avant-garde music and jazz. She is friends with Yan Jun and goes almost every week to 2 Kolegas. There is a vague likeness between the art of guqin and Western experimental music: the scores indicate tunings, fingerings, and articulations but fail to specify rhythms, resulting in markedly different interpretations by performers of competing schools. Wu sometimes plays in the "old times" style, as she calls it, and sometimes adopts a kind of cool, modal jazz approach; either way, she shows profound sensitivity to her instrument. She recently gave a concert at Roulette, an experimental space in downtown Manhattan, in collaboration with a vocalist and a dancer. Old and new merged in a mesmerizing whole.

When Wu Na returns to Beijing, later this summer, she hopes to develop a cross-cultural exchange that will bring traditional Chinese masters to New York and jazz and blues musicians to Beijing. She noted that audiences in Beijing have little grasp of African-American music in its classic, early-twentieth-century forms. And I realized that, while I had gone around Beijing looking for "authentic" Chinese music, she had been doing the same in New York, searching, with little success, for old-time jazz and blues.

On a day when the center of Beijing was overrun by Olympic hullabaloo—in front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace, President Hu Jintao was lighting the Olympic torch, to the accompaniment of Hollywoodish fanfares—I went for a walk in the august sprawl of the Temple of Heaven complex, and saw a sign pointing to the "Divine Music Administration." No such place existed in my guidebook, but I followed the arrows nonetheless. After going around in circles for a while, I came upon a series of buildings where court musicians of the Ming dynasty once rehearsed. The buildings had recently been renovated, most of the rooms filled with exhibitions on Chinese musical history. One could bang replicas of ancient bronze bells and strum on a guqin. A young attendant was standing by. When I asked a question, she proceeded to play the guqin with expert grace. She seemed grateful for the attention; in the past hour, I had been the museum's only visitor.

Then I heard music—not recorded music but the real thing, a slow, grand, forbiddingly austere procession of sonorities. It emanated from behind the closed doors of a hall in the center of the complex. I cracked open the door, but an attendant shooed me away. "Not allowed," she said. I walked over to the box office and asked if a public performance was scheduled; the man behind the counter shook his head vigorously and said, "No music." Just when I was preparing to give up, I saw a van approaching. Twenty or so well-dressed Chinese tourists piled out. Guessing that they were headed into the hall, I slipped into their midst, and made it through the doors.

A half-hour performance ensued, with a full complement of Chinese instruments, and players dressed in vividly colored courtly garb. It was a sound at once rigid and brilliant, precise in attack and vibrant in delivery. It was the most remarkable musical experience of my trip. At the time, I didn't quite know what I was hearing, but I later surmised that I had witnessed a re-creation of *zhonghe shaoyue*, the music that resounded at the temple while the emperor made sacrifices to Heaven. Confucius, in the Analects, calls it *yayue*—"elegant music"—and laments that the people are discarding it in favor of vernacular tunes. Now it is a ghost in a phantom museum.

I walked for another hour in the temple park, thrilled to have had an aural glimpse of what I took to be the true music of China. A little later, I heard a wistful melody coming from an unseen bamboo flute, and went in search of its source, hoping for another revelation. After making my way through a maze of pine trees, I found a man of great age and haunted visage, playing the theme from "The Godfather." ♦

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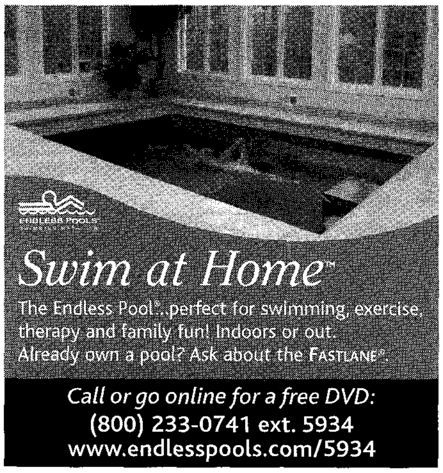
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BOOKS

CLOUDY TROPHIES

John Keats's obsession with fame and death.

BY ADAM KIRSCH

In July, 1820, John Keats published his third and final book, "Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes and Other Poems." He had no reason to expect that it would be a success, with either the public or the critics: in his short career, the twenty-four-year-old poet had known nothing but rejection on both fronts. After his first book, "Poems," appeared, in 1817, his publishers, the brothers Charles and James Ollier, refused to have anything more to do with him. In a letter to the poet's brother George, they wrote, "We regret that your brother ever requested us to publish his book, or that our opinion of its talent should have led us to acquiesce in undertaking it." They went on, "By far the greater number of persons who have purchased it from us have found fault with it in such plain terms, that we have in many cases offered to take the book back rather than be annoyed with the ridicule which has, time after time, been showered upon it."

When Keats's long poem "Endymion" came out, the following year, from a different firm, the ridicule was even worse, and far more public. The leading Tory magazines of the day published savagely satirical reviews, linking the poem's undisciplined exuberance with its author's working-class origins. Keats was the son of a stable-keeper, and he had trained as an apothecary: no wonder, the critics smirked, that he had fallen in with the sentimental "Cockney School" of poets, led by the radical journalist Leigh Hunt. Keats's class and his liberal politics were enough to damn him sight unseen, as the *Quarterly Review* made clear when its critic admitted that he had not bothered to read "Endymion" to the end: "If any one should be bold enough to purchase this 'Poetic Romance,' and so much more patient, than ourselves, as to get beyond the first book, and so much more fortunate as to find a meaning, we entreat him to make us acquainted with his success." *Blackwood's Magazine* said, "It is a better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet; so back to the shop Mr John, back to 'plasters, pills, and ointment boxes.' "

After all this, Keats could hardly have been optimistic about his third volume. He grumbled in a letter to George that he ought to give up writing and become a doctor—it couldn't be any "worse than writing poems, & hanging them up to be fly-blown on the Review shambles." But he must have been particularly unsettled by a review in the *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*. The book was not mocked; the anonymous critic simply said, more in sorrow than in anger, that it was not much good. "We confess this volume has disappointed us; from Mr Keats's former productions, we had augured better things," the paper opined. "We are confident he can do better."

To Keats, this would have been the bitterest verdict of all, for by the summer of 1820 he knew that he would not live to publish another book. Tuberculosis was slowly choking him to death, leaving him without the will or the energy to work: he had written almost no poetry since late the preceding year, and would write no more before he died, in Rome, in February, 1821. Keats continued to believe that, with time and study, he would have become a great poet, but he was starting to agree with the critics that nothing he had written could prove it. A year before his death, he wrote that he was reconciled to failure: " 'If I should die,' said I to myself, 'I have left no immortal work behind me—nothing to make my friends proud of my memory—but I have lov'd the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remember'd.' "

Of all the piteous elements in Keats's story, none is more distressing than the idea that he went to his grave convinced of his failure. For Keats's last book, in addition to the three masterpieces named in its title, included a series of odes—"Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Ode to Psyche," "Ode on Melancholy," and "To Autumn"—that are now universally regarded as among the greatest poems in the English language. If any single book ever earned its author immortality, it was this one. And, as Stanley Plumly points out in "Posthumous Keats" (Norton; $27.95), his moving new study of the poet's work and legend, "one could form a considerable collection from what was left out of this last book." Some of Keats's best poems, including "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," were never collected in his lifetime.

Did Keats really believe that, having written such poems, he was a failure? The question is more urgent in his case than in any other poet's, for no writer ever yearned for fame more ardently than Keats. His ambition was all the more remarkable considering that he started life with none of the advantages of the noble Byron or the wealthy Shelley. Born in 1795, the eldest child of a prosperous working-class family, he soon learned how precarious his fortunes really were. His father, Thomas, died in a riding accident when Keats was eight years old, a blow made worse by the remarriage of his mother, Frances, just a couple of months later. The hasty marriage was brief, and when it collapsed Frances disappeared in a cloud of scandalous rumors, leaving her children in the care of their grandmother. When she came back home, a few years later, it was to die. John nursed her through the final stages of consumption, as he was to do with his youngest brother, Tom, in 1818.

Keats, orphaned at the age of fourteen, was not entirely without resources. A small legacy paid for his apprenticeship to a surgeon, after which he went on to medical school, leaving in 1816 with a license to practice as an apothecary—the lowest, most menial kind of medical man. But by then he had decided that poetry, not medicine, was his calling. In the time remaining to him—less than five years—he lived off the remains of his inheritance in order to devote himself to greatness.

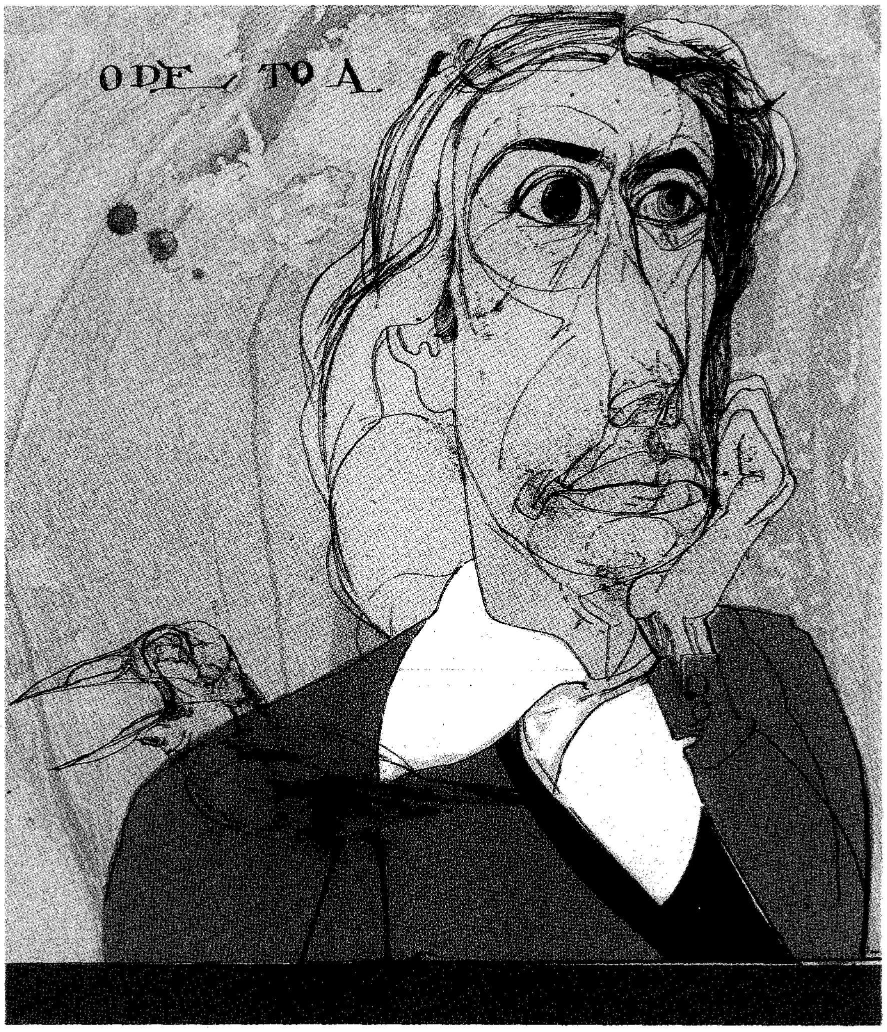
From his first mature poem, the sonnet "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer," written just before his twenty-first birthday, to his last—the dreamlike fragment "The Fall of Hyperion," which he abandoned just before his twenty-fourth—this ambition was Keats's major theme. In that first poem, written in the early-morning hours after a night spent reading Homer with friends, Keats evokes his dawning sense of the immense realm of poetry—“like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes / He stared at the Pacific”—and of the heroic effort required to carve out for himself one of the “goodly states and kingdoms” which “bards in fealty to Apollo hold.” In the last, he records a hallucinatory encounter with the goddess Moneta, who tells him that his quest has failed, that he is not a poet but a mere dreamer:

> The poet and the dreamer are distinct,
> Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.
> The one pours out a balm upon the world,
> The other vexes it.

Keats offered an apparently unambiguous assessment of his short career when he told his friend Joseph Severn—a young painter who volunteered to accompany him to Rome, and nursed him through his last months—that he did not want his name to appear on his tombstone. Instead, he instructed, it should simply read, “Here lies one whose name was writ on water.” Yet Plumly, an award-winning poet, is deeply attuned to the subtleties of poetic ambition, and he points out that the famous epitaph is not quite as resigned as it seems. “The fact that Keats did not want his name to appear on the tombstone adds only interest to the mystery of who might be buried so anonymously,” Plumly writes. “The unnamed is, after all, written in stone, not water.” It is the epitaph not of a man accepting oblivion but of a poet cultivating his legend from beyond the grave. Plumly quotes Keats’s publisher John Taylor, who approved of the anonymous gravestone because he foresaw “that it will be as clear an indication to posterity as the plainest, everyday inscription that one may find in Westminster Abbey.”

Such moments of canny sympathy justify the unusual approach that Plumly takes in “Posthumous Keats.” Instead of simply recounting the life and analyzing the poems, Plumly pursues his intuitions through a series of linked essays, all of them concerned with aspects of the poet’s death and afterlife. He explores the “drawings, paintings, engravings, and sculptings” of Keats’s face “by some forty separate artists,” showing how he was turned into the Victorians’ archetypal poet, “perfected and abstracted” into unrecognizability. He narrates Keats’s last days in Rome, evoking the eerie contrast between the sensual city and the increasingly incorporeal sufferer. He shows us Keats running into Coleridge on Hampstead Heath, and quotes the older poet’s prophecy: “When I shook him by the hand there was death!”

Through this interweaving of themes and episodes—a “walk around in Keats’s life and art, not simply through them”—Plumly emphasizes, as a more conventional biography never could, the fatal, fated quality of Keats’s career. He shows how Keats, in a way that feels unique even among the doomed Romantics, became posthumous while he was still alive. In one sense, this is because he knew that he was dying long before death arrived. Thanks to his medical training, and to his experiences nursing his mother and his brother, Keats was well acquainted with the symptoms of tuberculosis. On February 3, 1820, when he fell into a coughing fit and brought up blood on the sheets, he had no doubt what was in store. “I know the colour of that blood. It’s arterial blood,” his friend Charles Brown remembered Keats saying. “That blood is my death-warrant. I must die.”



“I have an habitual feeling,” Keats wrote, “that I am leading a posthumous existence.”

DAVID HUGHES

For the next year, Keats went along with his doctors’ various treatments—bloodletting, starvation diets, complete avoidance of excitement. He agreed to leave England, on the slight chance that Italian air would cure him. But he could never trick himself into believing that his first, fatal diagnosis was mistaken. In November, 1820, in the last letter Keats wrote, he told Brown, “I have an habitual feeling of my real life having past, and that I am leading a posthumous existence.”

Keats is hardly the only nineteenth-century writer to have died a lingering, consumptive death; what sets him apart is that his art, from the beginning, was connected with the imagination of death, especially his own. Like Socrates, he could have said that his life was a long preparation for death, so often had he written about it in poems and letters. Keats's "posthumous existence," one might say, began at the moment he became a poet.

That is why, after he died, so many of his lines began to look eerily like premonitions. In "Sleep and Poetry," an early attempt at a long poem, Keats was already bargaining for time to complete his work: "O for ten years, that I may overwhelm / Myself in poesy; so I may do the deed / That my own soul has to itself decreed." By the age of twenty-one, he was imagining what it would be like to lie in his grave:

> If I do fall, at least I will be laid
> Beneath the silence of a poplar shade;
> And over me the grass shall be smooth-shaven;
> And there shall be a kind memorial graven.

The union of poetry and death, in Keats's work, only became more intimate as his powers grew. In March, 1817, shortly after the Parthenon marbles taken from Greece by Lord Elgin had been put on display at the British Museum, the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon took Keats to see them. A day or two later, Keats recorded his impressions in a sonnet that invokes death in its very first line:

> My spirit is too weak—mortality
> Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
> And each imagined pinnacle and steep
> Of godlike hardship, tells me I must die.

Why should the sublimity of these images immediately have reminded Keats that he must die? One might as well ask why he exclaimed, in another poem, "Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed, / But Death intenser." Or why, in one of his last poems, a love sonnet, he yearned "Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath, / And so live ever—or else swoon to death."

It would be easy to explain Keats's preoccupation with death by assigning it a straightforward biographical cause. Many biographers and critics have pointed to the early loss of his father, and to his bedside view of his mother's and brother's slow deaths. Then, there was his experience as a student at Guy's Hospital, in London, where he attended gruesome surgeries and dissections. To an extent unusual even by the grim standards of his time, Keats was constantly surrounded by death and dying. It was only rational for him to wonder if he, too, would die young. This was, in fact, the subject of one of his most moving sonnets—the one that begins, "When I have fears that I may cease to be / Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain."

Plumly unsparingly relates the bodily reality of Keats's sickness and death. His description of the poet's last days is as clinical as anything Keats might have observed while walking the wards:

> First the coughing of "a fawn coloured mixture" of blood and phlegm, then diarrhea, then laxity and gripping of the bowels, then food—warm milk and pudding—then the cycle starting over again, with the sweats lasting usually until dawn. The waste itself was mucus, nothing solid, though in the struggle not to go under, the expectorations seemed to thicken and boil in the throat.

After all this, it might seem insane to assert, with Wallace Stevens, that "death is the mother of beauty." Yet Stevens was the most Keatsian of twentieth-century poets, and his famous line is absolutely faithful to Keats's belief. To understand why Keats meditated so constantly on death, it is not necessary to look to his biography; one need only listen to his writing.

When it first dawned on him that he might be a poet, Keats—well aware of his class disadvantages and his limited education—was almost frightened by his audacity. "I have asked myself so often," he wrote to Leigh Hunt in May, 1817, "why I should be a Poet more than other Men,—seeing how great a thing it is." But it did not take long for Keats to sense that his gifts were equal to his ambition. Bad reviews in the quarterlies, he once told George, were "a mere matter of the moment—I think I shall be among the English Poets after my death."

But Keats was not content to wallow in visions of glory. Once he took fame as his destiny, he began to question its value and purpose. This is a kind of self-questioning that comes to most poets only in middle age, if it comes at all. To Keats, who compressed the experience of a lifetime into a career of five years, it came in his early twenties. And it led him inevitably to the paradox of posthumousness, the way that immortality is gained only at the price of mortality.

"There is an awful warmth about my heart like a load of Immortality," Keats once declared. Yet he recognized that no dead poet, however famous, can actually enjoy his fame, as he acknowledged in a bitter sonnet to Robert Burns: "Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name— / O smile among the shades, for this is fame!" For art to deserve the supreme value that Keats assigned it, it must mean something more than the glorification of the artist. Beauty must be a good in its own right, even a metaphysical principle. In serving beauty, Keats came to believe, he was in some obscure way serving the divine, not just his own ambitions. Finally, he decided, "I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the Beautiful even if my night's labours should be burnt every morning and no eye ever shine upon them."

This worship of the beautiful has often appeared, to Keats's detractors, as crass sensuality. A critical trope connecting Keats's luxuriant language with his low origins has been remarkably durable. In Matthew Arnold's view, Keats's love letters displayed "the entire want of tone, the abandonment of all reticence and all dignity, of the merely sensuous man, of the man who 'is passion's slave.' . . . One is tempted to say that Keats's love-letter is the love-letter of a surgeon's apprentice." In the same vein, W. B. Yeats wrote, "I see a schoolboy when I think of him, / With face and nose pressed to a sweet-shop window," a boy "poor, ailing and ignorant, / Shut out from all the luxury of the world, / The coarse-bred son of a livery-stable keeper."

Yeats was thinking of passages like the one from "The Eve of St. Agnes," in which Keats conjures up "a heap / Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd, / With jellies soother than the creamy curd, / And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon." So sternly does the literary superego command the sublimation of these childish pleasures that, even today, Plumly sounds suspicious of the "luxury, drapery, weft, and rich weave" of Keats's romances. Such lusciousness strikes him as "middle-brow" and "enabling," the side of Keats that the Victorians loved—tendencies that "reinforce rather than resist convention."

There is no such enabling to be found, however, in the great odes. Written between April and September of 1819, these five poems represent the apex of Keats's achievement, because they heighten almost beyond endurance the tension between beauty and death. Keats is not content to give either of these competing drives a simple victory. He does not say that beauty is defeated by the inevitability of death, or that death is an illusion that beauty's radiance can dispel. Instead, the poems are a series of sustained balances: in the "Grecian Urn," between "heard melodies" and those "unheard," the "sensual ear" and the "spirit"; in the "Nightingale," between "the weariness, the fever, and the fret" of human life and the "ecstasy" of song. In the last stanza of the "Ode on Melancholy," these opposites join in a mysterious avowal:

> Ay, in the very temple of Delight
> Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
> Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
> Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
> His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
> And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

To be defeated by sorrow, in this poem, is to triumph over it. The poet's reward is no longer to collect a trophy from posterity but to become a trophy himself—as though his suffering and his pleasure were an offering to the gods.

Yet the consolations of poetry, as "Posthumous Keats" reminds us, last only as long as the poem lasts. The sublimity of the odes did not stop Keats from suffering in body and mind, or from cursing the fate that allowed him to taste the pleasures of life and art so intensely, only to snatch them away. "Keats, of all poets, cannot be divided between the artist and the man," Plumly writes. But in a sense it is precisely the violent sundering of the artist and the man that is Keats's tragedy. The poet saw autumn as fulfillment, the season that "set budding more,/And still more, later flowers for the bees,/Until they think warm days will never cease." The man died in winter, in a foreign country, certain that his work had not kept the promises his imagination made. "Is there another Life? Shall I awake and find all this a dream?" he asked in one of his last letters home. "There must be," he decided. "We cannot be created for this sort of suffering." ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Garden of Last Days, *by Andre Dubus III (Norton; $24.95).* Dubus's follow-up to "House of Sand and Fog" is inspired by the rumored visit of 9/11 hijackers to a strip club shortly before their attacks. In the fictional Puma Club, in Sarasota, Florida, a twenty-six-year-old named Bassam al-Jizani watches Spring, a stripper, undress, and finds his "hatred for these kufar rising with the knowledge of his own weakness." We know he is entranced, because he does not imagine slitting her throat, as he does with most people he encounters. Bassam recoils from the hedonistic pursuits of the West, yet finds himself drawn to them; losing his virginity to a prostitute, he wonders, "How many years will she be given by the Creator before she will burn?" Imagining the mind of a terrorist, Dubus runs into a familiar problem: Bassam's thoughts are a case study in the banality of evil. "Hatred gives him strength," he writes. But it doesn't make him interesting.

Breath, *by Tim Winton (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $23).* Bruce Pike, a middle-aged paramedic, is adept at distinguishing a suicide from an error in judgment; his own turbulent adolescence accounts for this grim bit of wisdom. Growing up in a conservative Australian mill town not far from the coast, he and a daredevil buddy are swiftly drawn by the call of the big wave: "I couldn't take my eyes from those plumes of spray, the churning shards of light." The youngest surfers on the beach, they are tutored in the more arcane aspects of the sport by a charismatic older man named Sando. Sando's wife, meanwhile, represents another sort of danger: once a freestyle skier, she's now housebound with a mangled knee, and hungers for the thrills that once sustained her. Winton's latest novel is both a hymn to the beauty of flying on water and a sober assessment of the costs of losing one's balance, in every sense of the word.

Kafka Comes to America, *by Steven T. Wax (Other Press; $25.95).* Wax, the head of the Oregon Federal Public Defenders' office, writes that when he volunteered to represent inmates at Guantánamo Bay he didn't know if his clients "would be terrorists or innocents." At least one, Adel Hamad, a Sudanese aid worker, seems patently innocent, and Wax also represented Brandon Mayfield, a lawyer whose story—he was falsely linked to a bombing through shoddy fingerprint evidence—illustrates the short path from depriving terrorists of their rights to depriving everyone else. In an enthralling, enraging narrative, Wax captures the damage that Guantánamo has done to America's reputation abroad, and shows how the legal fights on behalf of detainees might restore it. When Hamad, who helped run a hospital for refugees and was known for his Ping-Pong skills, disappeared, his wife was left destitute, and their infant daughter died from a lack of medical care. Hamad spent nearly five years at Guantánamo.

Collections of Nothing, *by William Davies King (Chicago; $20).* King, a professor at Santa Barbara, has spent decades collecting things that nobody else would want: food packages and labels (he has about eighteen thousand), illustrations snipped from old dictionaries (seven thousand), linings of "security" envelopes (eight hundred patterns), "the mute, meager, practically valueless object, like a sea-washed spigot, its mouth stoppered by a stone." What makes this book, bred of a midlife crisis, extraordinary is the way King weaves his autobiography into the account of his collection, deftly demonstrating that the two stories are essentially one. "I lost and found myself in remote topical aisles of scholarship-wreck," he says of his hours in Yale's library, reading the most obscure books he could find. His hard-won self-awareness gives his disclosures an intensity that will likely resonate with all readers, even those whose collections of nothing contain nothing at all.

THE THEATRE

SPOKESPEOPLE

Off Broadway takes on war, gender, and race.

BY HILTON ALS

Raffo, Lamm, and Sisto in "Palace of the End." Photograph by Steve Pyke.

One hesitates to call the Canadian playwright Judith Thompson's "Palace of the End" (an Epic Theatre Ensemble production, at Playwrights Horizons) a lyrical work, given its subject. Political pundits might be alienated by the idea of a hard-news story like the devastation in Iraq being treated in a poetic, "feminine" manner. But such is the power of Thompson's real, if uneven, talent that even the chest-thumping newshounds who see the show may find themselves recalling that the earliest reports of man's inhumanity to man took the form of poems, recited beside a crashing sea.

Still, it's the sound of desert sand scraping against the throat—and the mind—that one hears in Thompson's three monologues about lives laid waste by the wars in Iraq. The three actors are seated near one another on a small, sparse stage, each with his or her own distinct props and lighting. Lynndie (Teri Lamm)—who is based on the American soldier Lynndie England—is the first character we hear from. Dressed in fatigues, and speaking directly to the audience, she is a young, poorly educated, pregnant ex-Army officer who served in Iraq in 2003 and participated in the atrocities at the Abu Ghraib prison, which were recorded in a series of photographs that still haunt most Americans. Thompson's Lynndie, however, has no real moral compunctions about what she has done to people who share neither her ethnicity nor her values. To her, the only remedy for "otherness" is to stamp it out. Lamm doesn't play Lynndie as a hysteric with no mind of her own. Rather, she is as reasonable as any moderately personable young woman you might strike up a conversation with on a long-distance bus trip and forget about as soon as the journey is over. And that's what makes her the worst kind of scary: her brand of evil is insidious, almost unrecognizable, and before you know it she has slimed your soul with her ideology of hate.

Indeed, you could say that "Palace of the End" is a play about ideologies gone awry—or about using ideology as a shield against the horror of truth. As the lights go down on Lynndie, they come up on Dr. David Kelly (the incredible Rocco Sisto), a character based on the microbiologist and former United Nations weapons inspector who blew the whistle on Britain's trumped-up dossier on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, before dying mysteriously—most likely by his own hand. Thompson's Kelly feels as if he had betrayed a kind of cosmic Hippocratic oath. Nothing he does can reverse the torture, mayhem, and grief in Iraq, and the disaster there digs into his heart like barbed wire. Unlike Lynndie, he has never had the clinical detachment necessary to tolerate the pain of others.

"Palace of the End" is nicely directed by Daniella Topol, who works in an unobtrusive style that is as eerily flat as the light that shines on the play's characters. Topol leaves the poetic touches to Thompson, whose rhythmic language reaches its full flowering in the beautiful closing monologue, delivered by Nehrjas Al Saffarh (the immensely gifted Heather Raffo), a middle-class Iraqi woman who was tortured, along with her sons, under Saddam Hussein, and then died when her house was bombed by the United States, in the Gulf War. In Thompson's version of her life, Al Saffarh's belief in the power and wisdom of God is what sees her through the awful events that change her family forever. Dressed in a wraparound dress, occasionally flirting with the audience, Raffo plays Al Saffarh as a woman who has been defined by her economic and social class. What makes her a romantic—an ideologue—is her firm conviction that things will get better, somehow, somewhere.

As show-business survivors go, few are as graceful or as funny as the drag artist and singer Joey Arias. Despite the many pounds of transfiguring makeup, the multitude of wigs, and the numerous pairs of black stilettos and stockings he has acquired over time, Arias has managed to remain himself ever since he began performing—with the late German vocalist Klaus Nomi—in the late seventies. Arias first came to national attention in 1979, when he sang backup for David Bowie on "Saturday Night Live." It was the first time that many viewers had seen a male star of Bowie's calibre in a skirt, let alone in the presence of someone as outré, yet dignified, as Arias. And that's what has remained consistent throughout Arias's various incarnations. Whether he is "channelling," as he calls it, Billie Holiday or simply being his own diva—generally dressed in some version of Thierry Mugler bondage gear—Arias always maintains a certain natural dignity. He's a clown, but, like all great clowns, he takes his technique seriously enough not only to control the joke but to make himself the proud brunt of it.

For the past thirty years, Arias has performed in New York, mostly at small downtown venues, such as the now defunct Bar D'o, where he sang in the style of Billie Holiday. Attired in a form-fitting gown, with satin gloves and dangling earrings, Arias resembled Holiday, as she appeared on the cover of her last album, "Lady in Satin," and he drew his fans' attention both to Holiday's abstract phrasing and to her queenly masochism. Strolling through the audience, Arias had a hauteur that was of a piece with his desire to be loved. To Holiday's high, hornlike tone he added the hard-won self-knowledge of an out gay man.

He brings that same self-awareness—an unbitchy irony—to his fast and fascinating new show, "Arias with a Twist" (at HERE), conceived with the master puppeteer Basil Twist. Onstage, Arias first appears strapped to a wheel. He's singing Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir," and it's unlike any version of the song you've heard before, because Arias and Twist place it in a new context: Arias has been abducted by aliens, who admire his bustier-clad, high-heeled form. The aliens are wide-eyed, ghostly puppets, who spin Arias on the wheel—or "probe table"—and pump him for information about life on earth, as he claims to be a virgin and pleads with them not to "pop my cherry." Soon, Arias is released into a kind of psychedelic rain forest, where he eats mushrooms, talks to the audience about his sex life, and performs a ballad titled "Jungle of Eden," before reverting to what he has always been: a chanteuse whose sidesplits and potty mouth may keep him out of the Rainbow Room but will forever win him a place in our straight and queer hearts.

"Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind" (at the Kraine), an attempt to stage thirty plays in sixty minutes, is performed two nights a week by a group of some half-dozen actors who call themselves the New York Neo-Futurists. ("T.M.L.M.T.B.G.B." originated in Chicago, in 1988, and since then has continued in various forms both there and here.) The nod to the Italian Futurists and to Dada is intentional. Upon entering the theatre, you are given a name tag—with a random word on it—and within minutes you are treated to a surrealistic onslaught of playacting, the emphasis on "play." Each of the performers gives all that he or she has to the show, and to the individual plays, none of which exceed five minutes. How do they choose which plays to perform? They don't. The audience calls out its selections from the program. On the evening that I was there, the most satisfying pieces were "One Woman Show," by Sarah Levy, in which the adorable Cara Francis illustrated a series of one-liners about twenty-something women, using nearly every part of her body and a lot of rueful anxiety; and "Wheat from Chaff," by Joey Rizzolo, in which Kevin R. Free, a young black actor, confronted the audience with evidence of its racism. Not everyone in the house made it through the show. The New York Neo-Futurists say that their work is not about creating illusions in the theatre. What they do create is an entertaining forum for discussing the issues—race, sexuality, privilege—that always get New Yorkers steaming, especially in the summer heat. ♦

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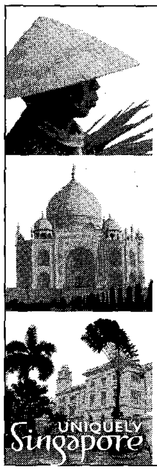

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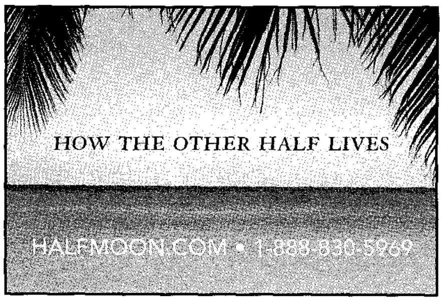

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

DESPERATE MEN

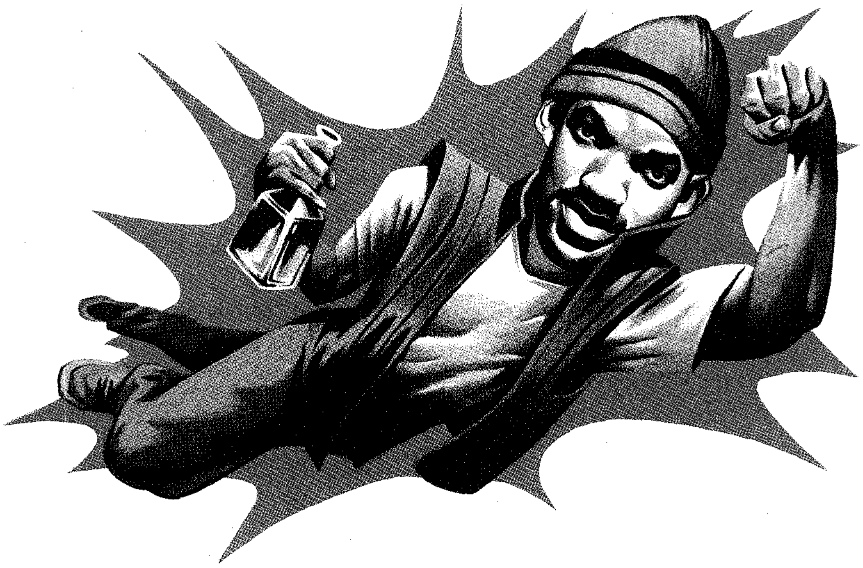
"Hancock" and "Tell No One."

BY DAVID DENBY

After "Speed Racer," "Iron Man," "Indiana Jones," "The Incredible Hulk," and "Get Smart" (which is so innocuous that you forget the jokes before you hit the street), it seemed clear that this year's big summer movies, however spectacular, had lost all interest in making even a minimal emotional connection to the moviegoer. But "Hancock," starring Will Smith, is a surprisingly resonant spectacle that places three people with recognizable feelings in the middle of a wild fantasy. For one thing, "Hancock" has the grace to acknowledge the audience's increasing impatience with digital wonders. Hancock (Smith), a lonely superhero in Los Angeles, can't fly anywhere without making a mess. Carelessly, he punches holes in glass-tower office buildings, and, when he lands on the street in some pleasant suburban neighborhood, he tears up the pavement. The public hates him, and the Dickensian TV lawyer Nancy Grace, of the curling lip and ferocious eye, is on his case. Consider this: A fellow named Ray Embrey (Jason Bateman) is stuck in his car at a railway crossing, and Hancock saves him from an oncoming train by putting up his hands and bringing the locomotive to a jolting halt. The trouble is, the piled-up cars behind the locomotive jackknife and fall off the tracks. Hancock doesn't mean any harm, but he's out of it—a heedless, drunken-slob nihilist who just happens to have supernatural abilities. Unlike a comic-book hero, he has no "normal" placid self; he's always an airborne bum. The grateful Ray, however, has a scheme for saving him. A good-hearted P.R. man, he insists that Hancock "interface with the public." He persuades him to wear tight-fitting rubber suits, like a proper comic-book hero, and to make smiling appearances at West Hollywood clubs.

"Hancock" was written by Vy Vincent Ngo and Vince Gilligan, directed by Peter Berg ("The Kingdom"), and produced by such shrewd Hollywood talents as Michael Mann, Jonathan Mostow, and Akiva Goldsman (among others), and, like the people who made "You Don't Mess with the Zohan," these filmmakers realize that it's time to transform digital into meta-digital. If everyone knows that digital has tossed realism overboard, then why not turn that knowingness into a joke? Hancock flips an obnoxious neighborhood kid into the sky and, looking up now and then, carries on a conversation with Ray, only to put out an arm and catch the howling towhead as he falls to earth. That's a pretty funny trick, and there are others just as good, but when Ray introduces Hancock to his wife, Mary (Charlize Theron), the movie, adding sexual tension and emotional power to its visual gags, reaches a new level. Theron looks at Smith with an uncanny mixture of alarm and attraction. What's going on with her? He may be a superhero, but he smells of booze. We're also puzzled by Berg's visual style, which, in these intimate scenes, depends on a handheld camera, restlessly moving yet pinned to the actors in super-tight closeups. It's as if he were making a Cassavetes psychodrama.

Suddenly, we realize why he stays so close. We are watching genuine actors at work, not well-paid hired hands filling up the space between agitated zeroes and ones. For the first time in his life, Will Smith doesn't flirt with the audience. He doesn't smile and tease and drawl; he stays in character as a self-hating lonely guy, and, in Berg's closeups, the planes of his face seem massive, almost sculpted. Charlize Theron undergoes her own kind of conversion. In such recent movies as "Monster," "North Country," and "In the Valley of Elah," Theron has drawn on rage—perhaps the anger that a beautiful woman feels toward an industry that initially wanted to confine her to decorative roles. In "Monster," she covered her face with prosthetics and tattoo ink, and in "Elah" and parts of "North Country" she was severe and drab. But Theron isn't running away from her good looks anymore. Wearing a simple sleeveless red shift, her blond hair hanging around her shoulders, she's a knockout in "Hancock," and she gives the sexiest performance of her career. The currents flowing between her and Smith are reminiscent of the heat generated by Gable and Harlow, say, or Bogart and Bacall. It turns out that there's a bond between these two (which I won't reveal), and the rest of the movie, which includes some superb comic invention as well as scarily turbulent scenes, grows out of it. "Hancock" suggests new visual di-



Will Smith's Hancock is a drunken-slob nihilist with supernatural abilities.

THOMAS FUCHS

rections and emotional tonalities for pop. It's by far the most enjoyable big movie of the summer.

The award-winning French thriller "Tell No One" is based on an American mystery novel, by Harlan Coben, that has been transposed to a French setting, and, halfway through the movie, I realized I was very happy that everyone was speaking French. The reason is simple: an American version of this material would have had too many explosions and far too much violence in general, and it would have been similar to thirty other thrillers made here during the past ten years. But the young director, Guillaume Canet, working with the screenwriter Philippe Lefebvre, has set Coben's material in a realistic social and working world where good-looking, intelligent, and articulate people find one another interesting. *La belle France!* This emphasis on sociability is not unusual in French commercial filmmaking, but it's virtually unknown in genre movies made here these days. There is violence—some of it startling, all of it significant—but that's not what the movie is about.

"Tell No One" is devoted to the explication of a single, devastating event, which we see at the beginning. At a lake deep in the Rambouillet Forest, near Paris, a happily married couple, Dr. Alex Beck (François Cluzet) and his social-worker wife, Margot (Marie-Josée Croze), celebrate their anniversary by going for a naked swim in the moonlight. After resting on a raft, they have a tiny quarrel, and Margot swims ashore. Still lying on the raft, Alex hears a muffled cry from the woods; he swims frantically, but when he climbs out of the water someone clobbers him, and he falls back into the lake. The movie then leaps ahead eight years: Margot was killed that night; Alex, a pediatrician, works in a clinic outside Paris. He's still in mourning, still eaten up by what happened—by what he didn't see, by what he doesn't know. He can never return to his private Eden, the erotic harmony of the forest and the lake, but he longs for it nonetheless.

Animated and charming with children and their parents, Alex, in the rest of his life, has become a stubborn, bitterly reserved man, opening up only to his sister's girlfriend, played by the English actress Kristin Scott-Thomas (whose French is good). Cluzet, a mainstay of French cinema for more than twenty years, has thick dark hair and a fleeting physical and spiritual resemblance to Dustin Hoffman. Like Hoffman, he's a preternaturally attentive actor who seems to see more than other people do. The dramatic life of "Tell No One" is centered in Cluzet's eyes. When messages show up on Alex's computer suggesting that Margot may still be alive, he's amazed and, in a state of bafflement, tries to reach her, only to run into the police and half the criminal underworld of Paris. "Tell No One" jumps all over the place but invariably returns to Alex's need for his wife, who, it turns out, was involved in relationships years ago that he didn't understand. Past events, like restless ghouls, keep barging into the present, and the many mysteries have to be explained in a long confession at the end. We know the material is artificially—even deviously—constructed, and we enjoy being manipulated by people who know what they're doing. But it's Cluzet's intense performance that makes this genre piece a heart-wrenching experience.

Canet commits one major error: the little clearing in the forest that Alex and Margot have been visiting since they were children can be entered only between parallel columns of gorgeous pink-orange rhododendron bushes, a Disney touch that we see twice and that converts sentiment into a mawkish sanctification of eternal love. Otherwise, he moves a talented cast skillfully through a large and varied world. It's a remarkably well-populated movie—fleshed out not just with Alex's family and friends but with a relentless group of high-tech thugs, including a female sadist with a long neck and powerful hands, which she uses to squeeze her victims in tender places (not the obvious ones). And there is the volatile criminal Bruno (Gilles Lellouche), a lowlife so indebted to Alex for his treatment of Bruno's little boy that he becomes a loyal friend and protector—an armed guardian angel. Bounced back and forth between these killers, Alex has some unsettling adventures and, in small increments, learns about the past. We're meant to be a little lost, too—tantalized by hints and partial appearances and echoes. Underneath all the mysteries, however, some powerful forces are at work—the corrupting effects of a great fortune, and the love of fathers for children, which causes two old men (Jean Rochefort and André Dussollier) to do vile things. This is a thriller that's more about discovery than about action. Alex's search for Margot becomes a search for truth. He can't tell the two quests apart, and, while watching "Tell No One," neither can we. ♦

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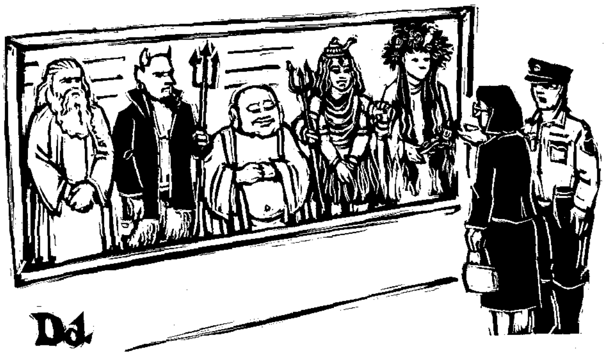
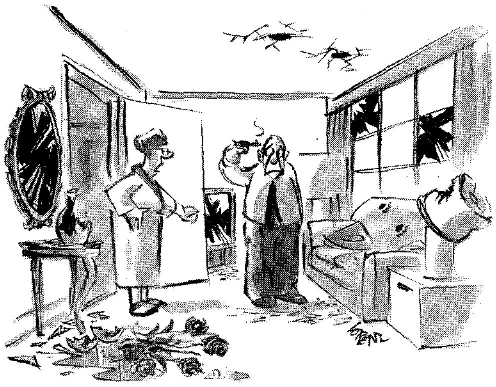
Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Mick Stevens, must be received by Sunday, July 13th. Finalists in the June 23rd contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the July 28th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"By the way, we are not allowed to show the face or image of No. 6."
Joel Collier, Roanoke, Va.



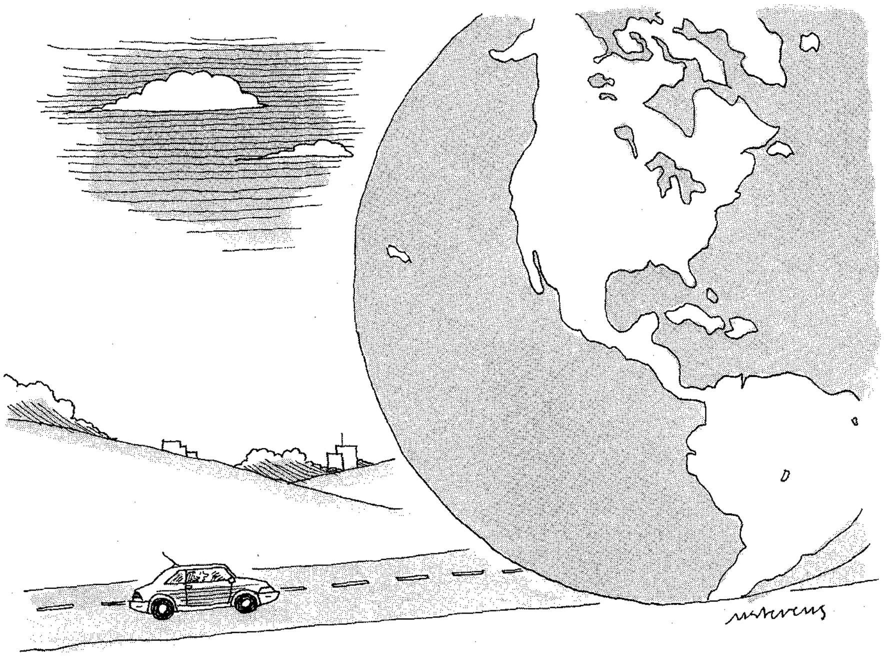
THE FINALISTS

"Bullets don't grow on trees, Harry."
Stephen Schweiger, Montclair, N.J.

"I told you to hire a professional!"
Ela Kotkowska, New London, N.H.

"Just come to bed and kill yourself in the morning."
Marcos El Malo, Los Angeles, Calif.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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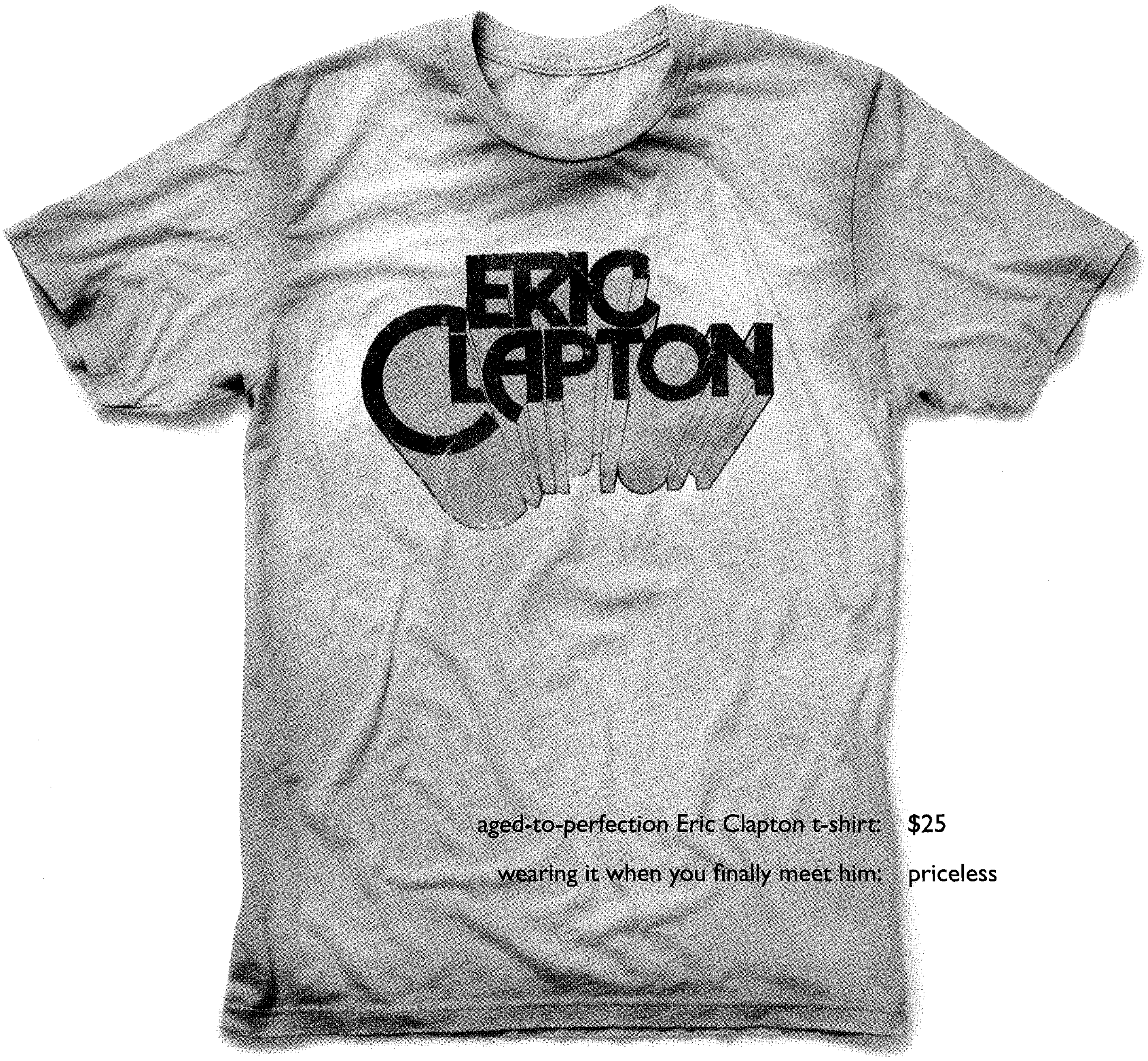

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Abbreviated Rules. No Text ("txt") or Purchase Necessary to Enter or Win. PIN-Based & International Transactions Ineligible. Texting or Purchasing Will Not Increase Odds of Winning.** Begins 7/1/08, 12:00:01AM CT & ends 8/31/08, 11:59:59PM CT ("Promo Period"). Open to legal US residents, 18+. During Promo Period, enter via: 1) *Online*: Complete/submit entry at priceless.com per instructions. Limit 1 online entry per person per day; 2) *Standard Txt*: Txt Keyword found in promo Ad or txt MUSIC to MCROCKS. Standard txt message charges apply & vary per carrier. Call carrier for pricing/service plan before entry. Limit 1 txt entry per person per day; 3) *US Based Purchase*: Receive 1 entry per MasterCard purchase & 1 add'l entry per *PayPass* tap purchase; &/or 4) ***Mail without purchase: Receive 2 entries by hand printing name, complete mailing address, age, phone & words "MasterCard Roots of Rock Sweepstakes" on 3"x 5" paper & mailing in sealed, stamped & hand printed #10 envelope for receipt by 9/8/08 to: Roots of Rock, P.O. Box 14079, Bridgeport, CT 06673-4079. Limit 1 entry per envelope, mailed separately. **(5) Prizes:** Winners' choice of one 4-night concert trip option for 4: *(Opt 1)* Kenny Chesney in TN; *(Opt 2)* Jon Bon Jovi in NJ; or *(Opt 3)* Eric Clapton in England (Max ARV of ea. Option=$15,000). Total ARV of all prizes=$75,000. Odds of winning depend on number of eligible entries rec'd. Taxes: Winners' responsibility. Void where prohibited. For full rules, including prize & other details, visit priceless.com or call 1 800 MC ASSIST. MasterCard, the MasterCard Brand *Mark, and priceless are registered trademarks of MasterCard International Incorporated. ©2008 MasterCard. All Rights Reserved.* ***Sponsor:*** *MasterCard International Incorporated, 2000 Purchase Street,* Purchase, NY 10577. **Promoter:** Project Support Team, Inc., 6 Berkshire Blvd, Bethel, CT 06801/www.ProjectSupportTeam.com

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